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1996-1997

REFERENDUM NEWS:
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A Startling Memory Feat That You Can Do

How I learned the secret in one evening. It has helped me every day.

WHEN my old friend Richard Faulkner invited me to a dinner party at his house, I little thought it would be the direct means of doubling my salary in less than two years. Yet it was, and here is the way it all came about.

Towards the end of the evening things began to drag a bit as they often do at parties. Finally someone suggested the old idea of having everyone do a 'party-piece'. Some sang, others forced weird sounds out of the piano, recited, told stories and so on.

Then it came to Peter Brown's turn. He said he had a simple 'trick' which he hoped we would like. First he asked to be blindfolded. Those present were to call out 25 random numbers of three figures each, such as 161, 249, and so on. He asked me to list the numbers in order as they were called.

Peter then astounded everyone by repeating the entire list of 25 numbers backwards and forwards. Then he asked people to request numbers by their position in the list, such as the eighth number called, the fourth number and so on. Instantly he repeated back the correct number in the positions called. He did this with the entire list — over and over again without making a single mistake.

Then Peter asked someone to shuffle a deck of cards and call them out in order. Still blindfolded he instantly named the cards in their order backwards and forwards.

You may well imagine our amazement at Peter's remarkable feat. You naturally expect to see a thing of this sort on television or the stage. Even then you look upon it as a trick. But to see it done by an ordinary businessman, in plain view of everyone, blindfolded and under conditions which make trickery impossible, is astonishing to say the least.

* * * * *

On the way home that evening I asked Peter Brown how it was done. He said there was really nothing to it — simply a memory feat, the key to which anyone could easily learn in one evening. The reason most people have bad memories is because they leave memory development to chance. Anyone could do what he had done and develop a good memory, he said, by following a few simple rules. And then he told me exactly how to do it. At the time, I little thought that evening would prove to be one of the most eventful in my life, but that's what it proved to be.

What Peter said I took to heart. In one evening I made remarkable strides towards improving my memory. In just a few days I learned to do exactly what he had done. At first I amused myself with my new-found ability by amazing people at parties. Everyone was talking about my 'memory feat', and I was showered with invitations to all sorts of occasions. People often asked me how they also could become more popular and successful. I used to tell them to learn my 'memory feat' — but this is apart from what I want to tell you now.

The most gratifying thing about the improvement of my memory was the remarkable way it helped me in business. I discovered that my memory training had literally put a razor edge on my mind. My thinking had become clearer, quicker, keener. I was fast acquiring that mental grasp and alertness I had so often admired in men who were spoken of as "brilliant" and "geniuses".

Then I noticed a marked improvement in my writing and conversational powers. Formerly my writing and talk was halting and disconnected. I could never think of things to say until the conversation was over. But now words and ideas leap into my mind. I never have to search for the right word, the right expression or the right thing to say. Instantly I find myself impressing people with bright, sparkling conversation.

It wasn't long before my new-found ability to remember attracted the attention of our Chairman. Since then my salary has increased dramatically.

I found that my ability to remember helped me tremendously in dealing with other people, particularly in meetings. The man who can back up his statements quickly with a string of definite facts and figures dominates every situation. Now it seems as though I never forget anything. I can instantly recall any fact I want to remember as if it were printed in black and white!

* * * * *

These are only a few of the hundreds of ways I have profited by my trained memory. No longer do I suffer the frustration of meeting people I know and not being able to recall their names. The moment I see someone I have met before a name leaps into my mind, together with a string of personal facts. Now I find it easy to recall everything I read. I can now master a subject in considerably less time than before. Price lists, reports, quotations, data of all kinds. I can recall in detail almost at will. I rarely make a mistake.

What's more, I can now do my day's work quicker and with much less effort than before.

What Peter told me that eventful evening was this: "Send for details of Dr. Bruno Furst's Memory Course." I did. That was my first step in learning to do all the remarkable things I have told you about. In fact, I was so impressed that I got permission to publish Dr. Furst's Course myself.

My advice to you now is don't wait another minute. Full details of Dr. Furst's remarkable Course are available free on request. You will be amazed how a powerful memory can improve your opportunities at work and in your social life. You have everything to gain and nothing to lose by posting the coupon today.

BOB HEAP

* * * * *

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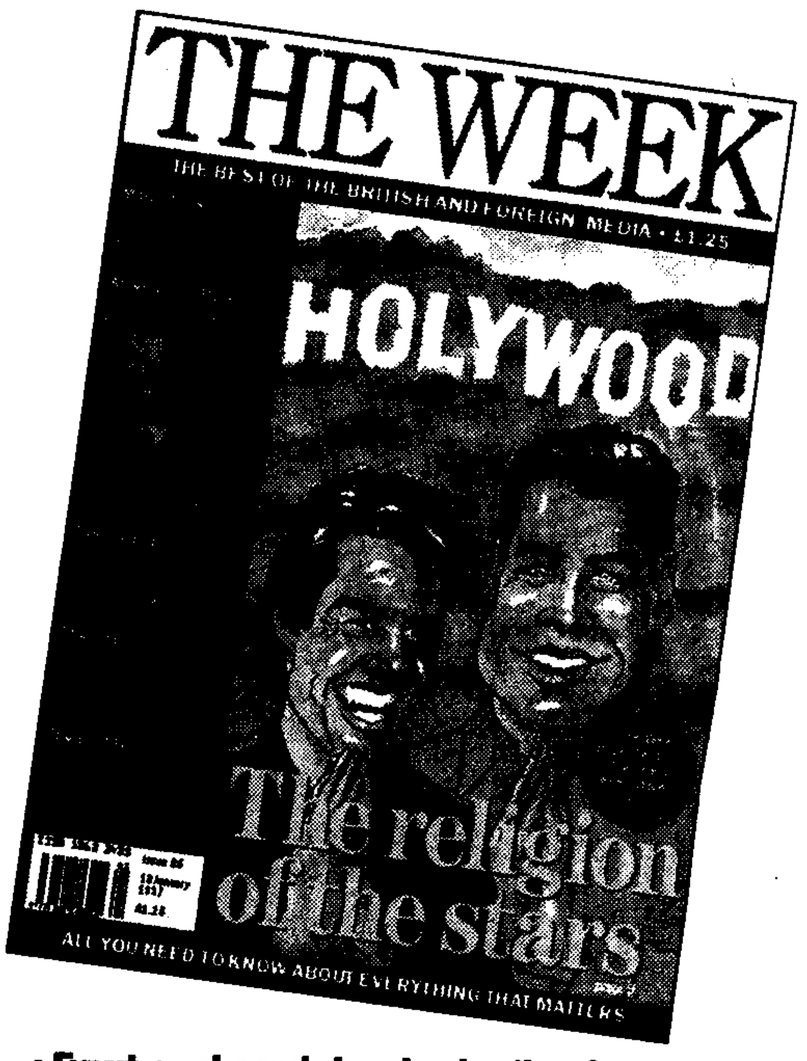
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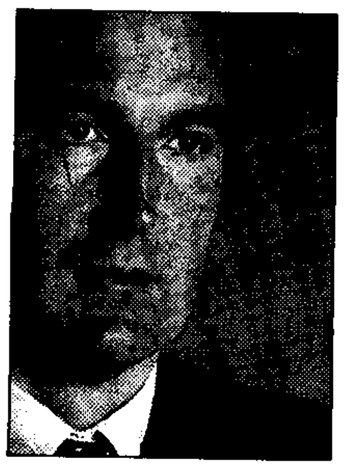

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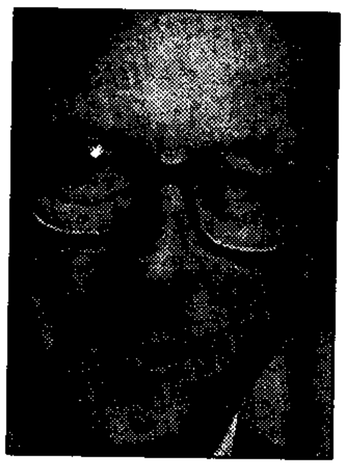

Or, as **Max Hastings**, editor of the *Evening Standard* said: "*The Week* is a brilliant concept, which has become compulsory reading for everybody who is afraid of having missed something over the past seven days, which means all of us."

Alan Rusbridger, editor of *The Guardian* concurred, adding: "Brilliant concept. Brilliantly executed."

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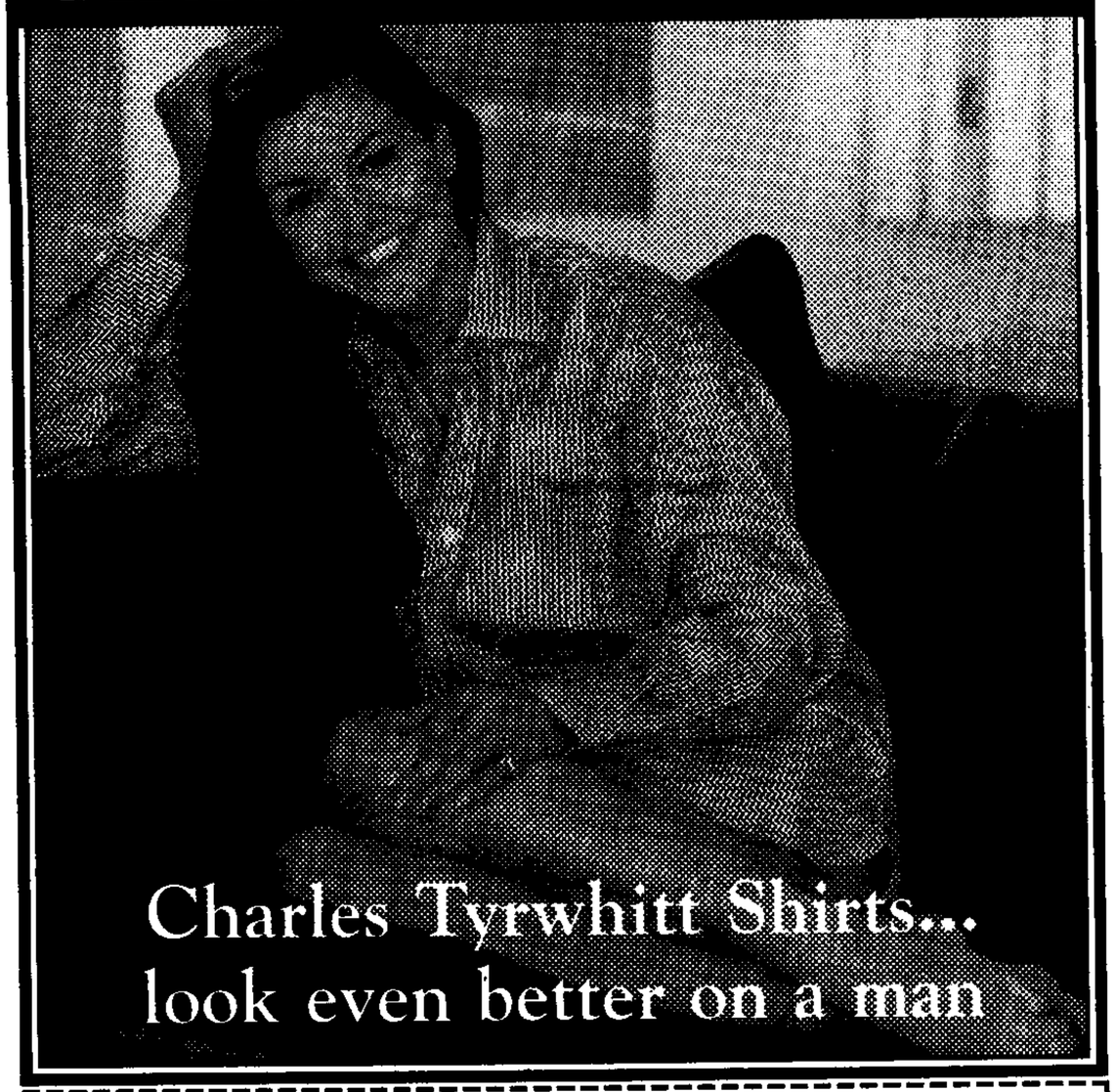

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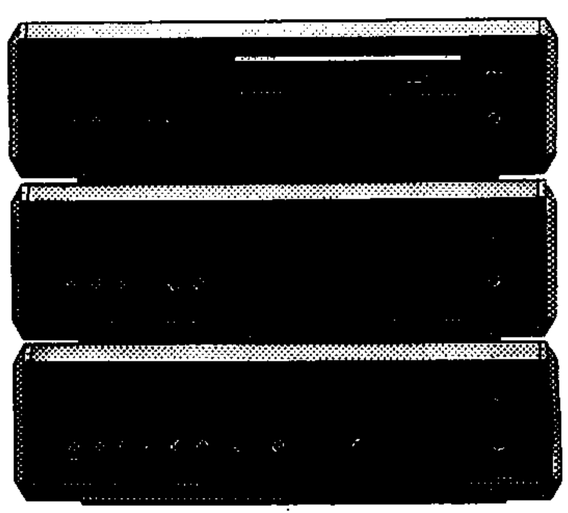

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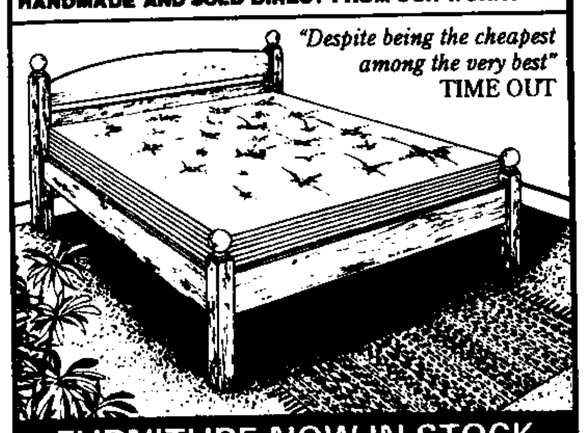

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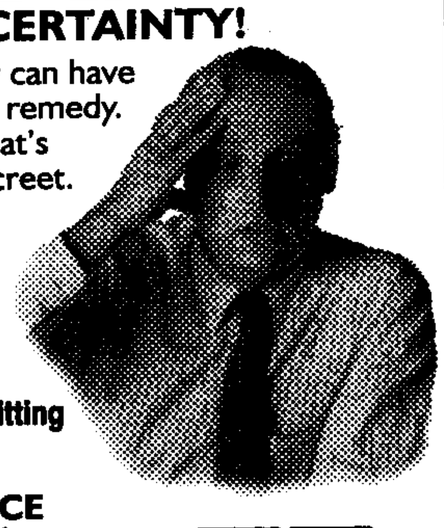

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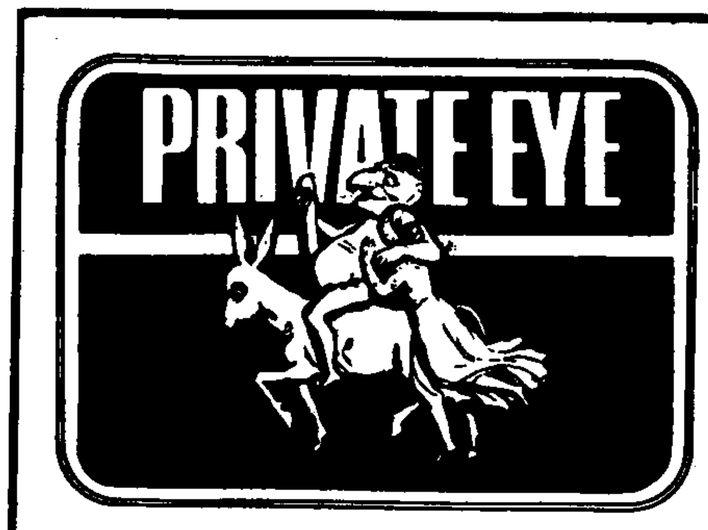

COLOUR SECTION

TORY MP Neil Hamilton can't afford the expensive lawyers he instructed before his *Guardian* calamity, so when he heard Channel Four *Dispatches* was sniffing round his story he was obliged to write to the programme makers and the *Guardian* himself.

In his letters he fulminated in his usual flamboyant style about the possibility that the programme would use information which had been "discovered" in the libel action and which therefore could not be publicised. The reply from the *Guardian* was short. After flatly denying any disclosure of "discovered" documents, it reminded Hamilton that the latest instalment of the £7,500 he agreed to pay in settlement of the action was still outstanding, and warned him that unless the money was received forthwith there would have to be an action for debt recovery.

What, meanwhile, are the libel prospects for that other former Tory minister, Jonathan Aitken, who has actions pending against Granada and the *Guardian* (*and the Eye, for that matter. Ed*)?

The former young meteor is trying to move the goal posts. Initially he demanded aggravated damages for the Granada/*Guardian* libel which, he said, had cost him his job as a cabinet minister. The defendants duly prepared a defence to the effect that Aitken's reasons for resigning as a minister had nothing to do with the libel, but a lot to do with revelations in the *Sunday Mirror* about his former affair with prostitute Paula Strudwick.

Impressed by this defence, Aitken and his lawyer went to the high court before Christmas to withdraw his claim that he had resigned because of the libel. To his horror, Mr Justice Ian Kennedy refused him permission to do so, and insisted that the original pleadings should remain. Aitken is appealing against this ruling. Whether he wins or loses that appeal, the libel case is likely to come up very soon after the election.

WILL the Commons standards and privileges committee ever get round to investigating Michael Grylls, smooth-talking Tory MP for North West Surrey and star of an extraordinary story in *Sleaze*, the new book on the Hamilton affair by David Leigh and Ed Vulliamy?

The story is attributed to Keith Lockwood, now a PR man for Vauxhall, but who in the early 1980s was working for the lobbyist Shandwick, one of whose clients was Rank Xerox. A Rank Xerox executive needed political support in a European anti-dumping case against Japan, and Lockwood fixed up a meeting with the chairman of the Conservative party's backbench trade and industry committee, one Michael Grylls MP.

In a phone conversation after the meeting, which was overheard by Lockwood, Grylls told the executive he was sure he could help, but only if Rank Xerox employed a good lobbying company — namely Ian Greer Associates, whose telephone number he promptly gave. When the executive explained that his company already had a lobbyist (Shandwick), Grylls said there was little he could do to help.

Lockwood described this as "the most blatant piece of commission-hunting I have ever come across". The standards and privileges committee might be more interested in the light the story sheds on the unusual behaviour of the Tory party's backbench trade and industry committee.

Historical Note 1: A prominent feature in the *Eye* of 8 October 1971, entitled Four Bust Men, described the conviction of a young Tory MP for breach of exchange controls by his firm, the Costa Brava Wine Company. His name? Michael Grylls. It was apparently during those troubled times that the young Grylls met his future business associate, Ian Greer.

Historical note 2: For much of the 80s Grylls chaired an organisation called the Small Business Bureau which was run from Tory Central Office. A prominent vice-president of the bureau was an enterprising friend and neighbour of Mr Grylls, Mr Abdul Shamji, who became an expert at hiring Tory MPs to do public relations with ministers for his Gomba group of companies (RIP).

THE news that up to six serving or former members of the North Wales police force have been sent "Salmon letters" by the Waterhouse inquiry into North Wales child abuse, warning them that allegations may be made against them at the inquiry, raises the delicate question of legal representation.

Quite early in preliminary hearings before Mr Justice Waterhouse, the North Wales police announced that they would not be representing individual officers at the inquiry. Into the breach stepped the Police Federation, saying that it would represent its members.

The *Eye* was informed that the federation had indicated later that this position had changed, at least in respect of some officers. And in December the *Eye* asked Mr Phil Edwards, the federation's representative in North Wales, if this was so. He said it was a matter for Paul O'Brien, deputy general secretary of the national federation. When the Eye asked the same questions of Mr O'Brien, he replied by fax: "No comment".

Meanwhile, the police and security services do not seem over-enamoured with the inquiry. As the *Eye* reported last March, there were strong demands for one from many quarters, including the Labour party, after the suppression of the disturbing Gillings report into child abuse in council homes which had been commissioned by Clwyd county council.

These were strenuously resisted by the then minister of state at the Welsh office, Rod Richards, a former intelligence officer who seldom missed an opportunity to voice the feelings of the police. Richards left office in the summer after tabloid references to his private life, and, after much hesitation, the new secretary of state William Hague eventually disregarded police unease and ordered a full inquiry.

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Street of Shame

A CITY fund manager is suspended on suspicion that she is preparing to defect to a rival firm. It happens all the time. So why the sudden eruption of interest in Nicola Horlick? The answer can be given in two words — "spin" and "doctor".

When her suspension was announced, last Tuesday, press coverage was muted. The general belief was that Morgan Grenfell wouldn't have taken such a drastic step without hard evidence. But then she hired the services of Anthony Cardew, a PR man who is known as the City of London's answer to Max Clifford.

He whetted the media's appetite by fixing her up with an exclusive interview in the *Financial Times*. By the time of her allegedly "impromptu" publicity stunt last Friday — when she stormed into her old office and jetted off to Frankfurt, with a posse of hacks and photographers conveniently in attendance — Cardew was spinning away like a whirling dervish.

And it worked: Saturday's front pages were festooned with pro-Horlick headlines such as "Superwoman Goes to War" (*Daily Mail*) and "City Bank Superwoman Wins the Day" (the *Times*). The tedious facts of the case — ie whether or not she had actually been plotting to poach staff — were swept away by a tide of gushing publicity about her eight-year-old daughter, her seven-month old baby and so forth. Later that day, capitalising on her triumph, Horlick again grabbed the front pages by taking her children for a photo-opportunity (*shurely "a walk"? — Ed*) in the park.

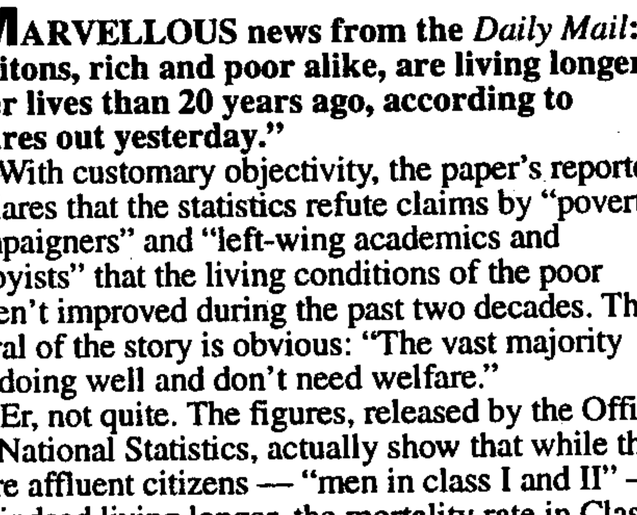
The relevance of all this to the case was hard to fathom; but what newspaper needs relevance when it can have pictures of a doting mum and her kids instead?

MARVELLOUS news from the *Daily Mail*: "Britons, rich and poor alike, are living longer, safer lives than 20 years ago, according to figures out yesterday."

With customary objectivity, the paper's reporter declares that the statistics refute claims by "poverty campaigners" and "left-wing academics and lobbyists" that the living conditions of the poor haven't improved during the past two decades. The moral of the story is obvious: "The vast majority are doing well and don't need welfare."

Er, not quite. The figures, released by the Office for National Statistics, actually show that while the more affluent citizens — "men in class I and II" — are indeed living longer, the mortality rate in Class V (unskilled workers and suchlike) has actually *risen* over the past 20 years. As the office points out, "there was still a clear social class mortality differential across all classes" — which hardly tallies with the spin put on the story by the *Daily Mail*.

Although this statistical sleight-of-hand was exposed two weeks ago by the *British Medical Journal*, the *Mail* has yet to publish a correction. Still, why let inconvenient facts stand in the way of the feelgood factor — especially in election year?



THE *Sun*'s resident "toff", Old Etonian Bill Coles, has been included in a forthcoming list of the country's 50 most eligible bachelors.

The feature will appear not in the *Sun* but the March issue of *Company* — along with an alluring photo of Coles, naked save for a copy of the *Sun* protecting his privacy. In the accompanying interview, Coles boasts that he won his journalistic spurs reporting from war-torn Afghanistan. He also claims that he works out at a swanky gym every day, and drives an Aston Martin.

Duly impressed, the swooning hackettes at *Company* have named him as the most eligible bachelor in Britain. The truth, alas, is rather more mundane. Coles learned his trade on a weekly paper in Cirencester, not Kabul; he spends his days spying on Prince William rather than working out with Princess Di; and he drives a rusty old Volvo.

HAVING spent the past couple of years demanding ceaseless cost-cutting from his galley-slaves, David "Rommel" Montgomery has suddenly given Piers Morgan £16 million to spend on the new, revamped *Mirror*.

But this uncharacteristic lavishness doesn't extend to the other papers in Rommel's stable. At a meeting in the Berkeley Hotel, London, last month, *Indie* editor Andrew Marr was granted only a "marginal" increase in his tiny budget. At the *Independent on Sunday*, which has operated on a shoestring for ages, last week's relaunch has not been accompanied by extra funds from the miserly Montgomery.

Things are now so bad at the *Sindie* that editor Rosie Boycott is having to subsidise the paper from her own purse. So keen was she to have a picture of a dalmatian puppy, to accompany a story alleging that the new *101 Dalmatians* film had provoked mass puppy farming and that pups born deaf (a common feature of the breed) were being killed, that she forked out £75, the fee demanded for entry to a rescue kennels that looks after the deaf dogs.

Perhaps Rommel, who has become a millionaire thanks to his lucrative share options, might care to reimburse her.

IT IS pleasing to learn that David "Rommel" Montgomery's newspapers north of the border are in safe hands.

While Liam Kane, the new chief executive of the *Daily Record* and *Sunday Mail*, has been on holiday, the company has appointed an "acting chief executive" — one Jim Park, who will thereafter become the papers' consultant advertising director.

Can this be the same Jim Park who was declared bankrupt in 1992? It can indeed. When he discharged his bankruptcy, in 1995, he set up a firm called Local Link Directories Ltd, publishing advertising directories for local businesses. Alas! Within months he was again being pursued by irate creditors for hundreds of thousands of pounds. One firm alone claimed that it was owed £10,000.

His new employers are presumably aware of all this — not least because the scandal was exposed in November 1995 by, er, the *Daily Record*.

MORE silliness at the *Express*, where on new year's eve a hack with 21 years' experience on the rag was suspended — and later fired with another sub-editor for the outrageous crime of taking a bottle of whisky from a crate outside the editor's office.

The reason for this disproportionate punishment soon became clear: it was yet another Clouseau-like attempt to cover up the paper's perpetual bungling. The cache of whisky, it seems, had been "loaned" to the *Express* as part of a propaganda wheeze by customs and excise, the stolen booze being potential court "evidence". Where better for cunning *Depress* executives to hide such exhibits than right under the noses of thirsty hacks at Christmas time?

CARLTON TV's debate and phone-in vote on the future of the monarchy was hotly debated in Scotland which — if the phone poll results were accurate — came out as the only republican area of the UK.

The next day, as usual the hypocritical *Sun* newspaper tried to curry favour with all its readers. The Wapping edition's headline trumpeted loyally that "Two Million Phone to Save Throne", while in Scotland, where the monarchy was not backed, the paper's headline read "Off With Their Heads".

"If you must wear a clip-on tie, do you have to make it so obvious?"

THE fearless *Daily Mail*, unencumbered by political correctness, ran a splendid two-page polemic against the Scots a couple of weeks ago, written by the paper's resident Essex Man, Simon Heffer.

But then *Mail* executives lost their nerve. Fearful of antagonising their loyal readers north of the border, they hastily commissioned a "right of reply" for the Scottish edition, singing the praises of oatcakes and sulphur and all things Caledonian.

Alas, this merely added insult to injury. For the hack to whom they entrusted the delicate task was none other than the new editor-in-chief of the *Scotsman*, Andrew "Brillo Pad" Neill — aka one of the most hated men in Scotland.

STEPHEN WILKIE, the *Daily Record*'s crime reporter, has parted company with the paper after his arrest during a drugs raid at a house in Glasgow.

An ex-*Sun* hack, Wilkie made his name during the trial of former gangland figure Paul Ferris, and later rose to become *Record* editor Terry Quinn's blue-eyed boy.

But the hack's increasingly bizarre behaviour has been a cause of concern at Anderston Quay for some time now, and following an internal inquiry Wilkie cleared his desk and left with an agreed settlement of three months' salary.

DAILY MAIL readers may have been puzzled by the sudden appearance of a "brilliant new gossip column" by one Ephraim Hardcastle. Doesn't the paper have a gossip column already, run by Nigel Dempster?

Indeed. But, it seems, *Mail* editor Paul Dacre feels that Humpty Dumpster's page isn't quite as brilliant as it might be. Since Dumpster is effectively unsackable, Dacre has decided to put the wind up him by recruiting his old sparring partner Peter McHackey to run a rival column within the same paper. Eager to ingratiate himself with the editor, McHackey suggested reviving "Ephraim Hardcastle" — a pseudonym used by Dacre's father, Peter Dacre, many years ago on the *Daily Express*.

As McHackey needs to set aside several hours every day for in-depth lunching, he naturally cannot be expected to produce the column single-handed. So Dacre has allowed him to hire an "assistant" — Sam Leith, a young Oxford graduate who previously worked at *Punch*. By an agreeable coincidence, Leith is the grandson of McLie's old chum and mentor, Sir John Junor. As Ephraim Hardcastle might say: isn't life grandy and dandy?

In fact the column is already living up to the high journalistic standards set by McHackey, complaining that *Private Eye*'s recent tribute to Willie Rushton was "rather thin" — consisting as it did of a specially-designed front cover and a couple of pages inside. "The magazine's official historian, Patrick Marnham, considered it pathetic and shaming," he adds.

Marnham is puzzled. "I don't recognise the quotes in 'Ephraim Hardcastle' about the tributes to Willy," he says. Surely Ephraim didn't just make them up, did he?

STREET OF SEAMUS

ONCE upon a time, Chris Roycroft-Davis, the part-time magician and long-term successor to Stuart Higgins as editor of the *Sun*, decided that sales could be boosted by playing one set of readers in Ireland off against the other.

Readers of the *Sun* in Ulster get a paper proudly labelled "Printed in Belfast" and loads of news agency copy reporting the RUC's struggle against the Provos. Those in the republic get a redder-tinted logo on their so-called *Irish Sun*, "Printed in Ireland, For Ireland", which is full of unstinting praise for the peace process. Different angles for different markets should theoretically maximise sales, provided the subs in Wapping can work out which story works where.

Alas! It all went horribly wrong when the antipodean gay rights activist Peter Tatchell surfaced in Dublin threatening to "out" an errant Catholic priest who had allegedly been cautioned by police after having sex with a 17-year-old rent boy. His arrival infuriated the *Sun*'s "Ireland bureau chief" Paddy Clancy, a fat Fleet Street veteran already smarting from the fact that although the *Sun* had been investigating the claims that attracted Tatchell, other papers got into print first.

A Brit-bashing leader was duly tapped into the computer system in the *Sun* offices on Dublin's Stephen's Green, demanding that Tatchell and his chums "should do Ireland a favour and clear off back to Britain. That should get rid of the nasty smell".

These words were intended only for readers south of the border — but, thanks to a subbing error at Wapping, they ended up entertaining purchasers of the Belfast edition.

While perusing the unfamiliar logo, the Dublin newsdesk phone number and lots of stories with a republican skew, *Sun* readers in Ulster belatedly realised that each night in London, Murdoch produces two *Suns* for Ireland, nationalist and unionist. Following indignant phone calls from outraged loyalists, the next day's leader page carried that rarity, a *Sun* apology: "WRONG PAGE. A production error meant some copies of yesterday's *Sun* contained a page intended for the Republic of Ireland edition. Sorry for this unfortunate mistake." You bet.

"Dad, I want to be a civil servant like you when I upgrow."

POLICE 5

GRAHAM POWER, deputy chief constable of Lothian and Borders, has much to ponder as a tribunal decides why he lost out on the top job with Northern force in the Highlands.

Backed by the Commission for Racial Equality, the Yorkshire-born policeman claims the Northern joint police board refused him the position because he is English.

There is, of course, absolutely no suggestion that the board was influenced by a curious affair which took place at a Falkirk filling station when, absent-mindedly, the would-be McKnacker forgot to pay for his petrol before leaving.

Service station worker Elizabeth Wilson, who reported an alleged theft, said investigating officers from the Central police region told her the driver would not be back in person. Instead, the money would be given to them "and they will pass it on. It all seems very strange," she said.

Central police later issued a statement: "We looked at the incident. The matter was resolved and there was no crime involved."

HALLO! THE HEARTWARMING COLUMN

HALLO! TO ANGOLA with Diana, Princess of Wales. What a minefield!

Diana had decided it would be wrong to be seen travelling in luxury to such a poor country. So as we squeezed into our club class seats on the Sabena flight, the Princess was furious to hear the sounds of merriment and popping champagne corks coming from the first class cabin — courtesy of the bolshevik press: Mr James Whitaker of the *Mirror*, and his cockney snapper.

However, Diana soon gets over her bate and poses beautifully against the stark African bush in her carefully chosen, non-designer safari outfits. Discreetly, the princess despatches her valet Paul Burrel (who for some unaccountable reason accompanies us on this trip) to let it be known she was "upset" that the world's press, even the *Guardian*, distract from her "mercy mission" by harping on about how fetching she looks in khaki.

Too upsetting!

HALLO! *ACCOMPANYING Diana was particularly hairy for poor Ian Jones of the Daily Telegraph, who was yanked from the hack pack on arrival at Luanda because he hadn't had the right jabs.*

In a Spartan airport side-room an immigration official took out a conspicuously dirty needle, donned a dirty white coat splattered with blood and announced with relish: "Now I inject."

Seeing the English hack turn deathly pale, the Angolan asked: "You not like?" When Jones stuttered that, no, he definitely did not like, the official suggested that for a mere $25 the trifling matter of contagious disease prevention could be overlooked. The man from the "law 'n' order" Torygraph did not think twice about paying the bribe. No doubt it'll go on expenses.

HALLO! DARLING chum Jerry Hayes is in dazzling form, quite undeterred by recent misunderstandings, as we share a stiff mid-morning gin and tonic at the Old Bell in Fleet Street — before proceeding to a memorial service at St Bride's Church, where Jerry sings lustily.

The setting clearly inspires him and he proves that he is capable of turning the other cheek even in his hour of adversity. After the memorial service, many mourners repair to a nearby hostelry, El Vino, and the first person Jerry spots is none other than Bob Warren, assistant editor of... the *News of the Screws*. Bold as brass, Jerry waltzes up, hand out. "No hard feelings, eh Bob?" he chirps. What a trouper!

The MP is only rendered speechless though, when a charming young member of the arty Sitwell clan, comes up to ask him a question. She inquires: "Which is your favourite Spice Girl?"

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"I think the press has a lot of power here, and that can be frustrating."

— ELIZABETH MURDOCH (relation), general manager of Sky TV, interviewed in the *Guardian*.

HALLO! BUT will adorable Jerry, once he losses his Essex seat at the next election, get that much-sought-after broadcasting career? Before Christmas, the betting at Westminster was heavily in favour — especially after the flamboyant Tory arrived by taxi, very merry, for that exciting EU fishing quotas vote after the beastly Labour louts had withdrawn pairing arrangements.

As Jerry leapt out of the taxi, with a balletic *jeté*, loitering Labour MP Anne Campbell was promptly regaled by the star-struck cabby with the story the gleeful Tory MP had been telling him: that Jerry had just come from a *tete-a-tete* summit with John Birt about, "my TV chat show".

John Birt seems to have forgotten about this conversation, but now is finitely the moment for Jerry to become the Wogan of the nineties!

JUST FANCY THAT

"A caution was the expected result. It's not something that one should sniff at or take lightly."

— MARK STEPHENS, solicitor, on Liam Gallagher's arrest, *NME*.

HALLO! THE nation mourns the tragic news that lovely Sophie Rhys Jones lookalike Jill Dando, the BBC's £750,000-a-year all-purpose presenter, has been dumped by older lover (and the man who discovered her) Bob Wheaton. "Pressure of work," says Jill Dumpdo.

Alas, one knew something was amiss before Christmas, when veteran BBC exec Bob was the life and soul of a jolly BBC "do" — even though Jill, his companion of seven years, was absent on a *Holiday* programme assignment.

Bob, once very close to lovely Sue "Legs" Lawley, was selflessly and charmingly attentive to all the gels at the Xmas hooley, despite being so dreadfully lonesome himself. "Watch out," hissed a secretary, mysteriously, to the Marquesa. "He's on the prowl."

Lucky the gel who catches Bob's eye: she'll soon be a TV star!

HALLO! I AM greatly perplexed by the blatherings of the odious Taki, who grumbled in his *Sunday Times* Attrocious column two weeks ago that "the ghastly Liam Gallagher got off his drug charge last week, and thumbed his nose (pun intended) at authority."

Why should the ageing Greek roué, himself a convicted drug-smuggler and nose-thumber, be so furious with young Gallagher? Surely he can't be *jealous* — can he?

HALLO! *FOR a long time now Buckingham Palace has had a consistent "off-the-record" line on why Prince Edward hasn't married PR person Sophie Rhys Jones: Edward first wished to make a success of his TV career.*

The delay has deeply irked Sophie, but the prince's allies insisted that once he'd "proved" himself in showbiz, he'd be in a position to, er, marry. True, 'til now poor Eddie's TV career has been a bit shaky. In the first three years Ardent Productions made over £1m losses. Last week, however, US TV giant CBS, anxious to cash in on US royal mania, signed a £2m deal for eight programmes — as long as Edward fronts them himself!

This is a mixed blessing. Financially it saves Ardent's bacon. But it also destroys Edward's rationale for not making an honest woman of Sophie. Ah well, my dears, that's showbiz!

'The Marquesa'

IN THE TEAROOM

BOTH main parties have almost exhausted their ammunition in the phoney campaign that's been waged since November. There are now very few insults or lies left to chuck at one another, and backroom strategists insist these be conserved until the election is announced for fear of boring voters into staying at home.

This leaves politicians with little real work to do — but with plenty of adrenalin coursing through the blood... which explains the late leadership bid of the normally level-headed Stephen Dorrell.

For years Dorrell has been staking out a position on the Patten-Clarke wing of the party: sensible about Europe, sceptical about Thatcherite excess. Now he's a pop-eyed raving Eurosceptic who wants to privatise social services.

Those political friends he has left after these sudden reversals are finally delivering some brutal truths. They're telling the over-excited health secretary that he hasn't got a prayer.

Meanwhile, unruly hormones are causing trouble for Tony Blair, too. Jack Straw has heard that he may not be home secretary after the election. One set of Blair advisers, alarmed that a testosterone-crazed John Prescott has been making noises about becoming another Hezza — chairing all the key cabinet committees — want the deputy leader bought off with a largely ornamental home secretaryship. But Gordon Brown's people are warning that if Robin Cook is allowed to have the foreign office, there'll be embarrassing splits between him and the new chancellor over Europe. So why not give Cook the home office instead?

All this has been enough to turn the sternly authoritarian Straw into a liberal — hence his enlightened conversion to the view that letting Inspector Knacker bug and burgle his way round Britain might not be such a good idea after all.

'Urquhart'

PERVERTING the pairing rules for MPs during the European fisheries vote was not the only way the Tories tried to disadvantage the opposition.

On the same day Scottish secretary Michael Forsyth had organised another publicity-seeking exercise way up in Inverness called the Convention of the Highlands and Islands.

Forsyth picked the members of this talking shop himself, and they included all the local MPs with Highlands interests. None of the eight MPs was Tory — but all had a strong interest in that night's Commons fisheries vote as their constituencies contain fishing communities.

After the meeting six of them had to make a mad dash for the scheduled 5.30pm flight from Inverness airport, which is notorious for its delays caused by sea fog. Mr Forsyth had no such problems. He had used his ministerial privilege to charter an RAF plane to fly him and his deputy, George Kynoch, to London for the crucial fishing vote.

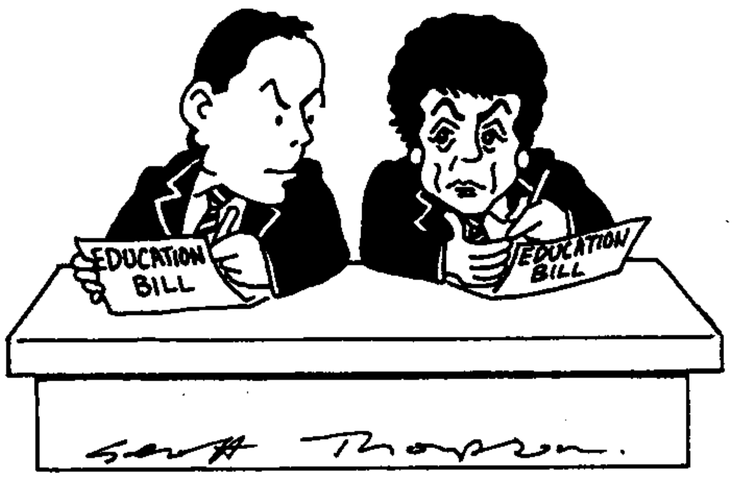
Earlier this year, Moray MP Margaret Ewing asked him for the costs of ministerial flights. He replied: "There is no ministerial aircraft."

THE leaking of a report by the nuclear industry's own scientists suggesting that Sellafield was an unsuitable site for a radioactive waste dump, has ended John Gummer's attempt to hush up the issue and spin out the release of the recommendations of a 66-day inquiry.

The inquiry closed in February last year and every conceivable attempt has been made to keep it dark. The report on the inquiry, as revealed by the last *Eye*, is throbbing away in the department of the environment as Gummer wonders what to say. He claimed the dump was just a local planning inquiry; that the department in London knew nothing about it; that inquiries should be directed to the Central Office of Information in the north-west. He even refused to provide a transcript of proceedings or a proper secretariat or a press officer. When a question was asked in parliament about when the report would be handed over, he gave a misleading reply. When the event actually happened, his department tactfully made no announcement.

The news of the internal scientific assessment was greeted with appropriate dismay by Michael Meacher, shadow environment minister. But though he tried to issue a statement saying so through the Labour party machine in Millbank Tower, the faxes stayed silent. What was the problem? The statement had to be cleared with John Cunningham, the nuclear industry's placeman in the Labour leadership.

Cunningham was once Labour environment spokesman and took Tony Blair to Sellafield and persuaded him to say there would always be jobs at the plutonium factory. Cunningham, a fanatical advocate of nuclear power regardless, gave evidence at the inquiry into the dump, saying it should go ahead (against his colleague Dale Campbell-Savours, who is also a local MP but is against). Though Cunningham has been demoted by backbench pressure to the national heritage job, he retains an iron grip on Labour's energy policy.



SHELL has now produced 11 ways of disposing of its troubled Brent Spar oil platform — and none includes sea dumping.

The entire oil industry will watch developments in a state of shock: what happens to Brent Spar will be a precedent for the 1,600 oil platforms and other structures standing in the North Sea and elsewhere offshore.

If, as now seems probable, they have to be removed rather than dumped at sea, the extra cost to the industry will be around £600 million a year for 25 years — a total of around £13.6 billion, according to latest European Union estimates. It would be a lot cheaper to dump them in the water, but for the present Shell recognises that this is not an option because of public opinion.

The announcement by Shell came three days after the news that Tim Eggar, former energy minister and a fierce opponent of compromise on the issue, had become a director of Monument Oil, part-owner of gas and oil platforms in the Irish and North seas. This will give him a voice in the oil industry proper: he already had the chairmanship of UK Kellogg, an engineering company which supplies oil refineries and petro-chemical plants, but it does not take part in exploration and production, which Monument does.

Eggar has always made clear his contempt for the oil industry's more conciliatory approach to the problem. "It should not be assumed that the option of deep-sea disposal has been eliminated," he said. Shell would have to bring forward highly convincing arguments to gain his permission (when he was still a minister) for onshore scrapping of the Brent Spar. But for Shell, business is business and its main concern, once Greenpeace had won over public opinion, was to find a way out. Eggar will have to decide whether to go along with his new business partners and swallow his pride or try to rally the oil industry for a war on the marine environment. Watch this space.

FEW Tory MPs can be as desperate as Welwyn Hatfield's motormouth barrow boy David Evans.

Evans is evidently so in need of support locally that he is even threatening to resign his seat and damage John Major still more unless the government agrees to bail out Evans's incredibly inept local *Labour* council.

Welwyn Hatfield council recently had to pay property company Slough Estates £48 million compensation after it allowed a rival developer permission to build a shopping mall in the area when sole rights had been granted to Slough Estates. The council faces bankruptcy or will have to shut down services to pay for the cock-up.

Rather than making political capital out of his Labour opponents' misfortunes in the run up to the election, however, socialist-hating Evans is putting his own neck on the line to curry favour locally. Of course if the government doesn't listen to him, Slough Estates' director Sir Nigel Mobbs might. He's one of the Tory party's biggest donors.

HAROLD ELLETSON, the dashing young Serbophile MP for Blackpool North and parliamentary private secretary to the Northern Ireland minister, shrugged off the story in the *Observer* (22 Dec) that he was an MI6 agent, with typical aplomb. "It's quite simply a piece of schoolboy fiction," he told the *Daily Telegraph* the next day.

A rather different view was taken by a mysterious but very senior diplomatic official with close connections to the foreign office. As soon as the rumour got out that the *Observer* had the Elletson story, the official insisted on a secret meeting with the paper's editor, Will Hutton. The rendezvous duly took place in the Palm Court of London's Waldorf Hotel, a favourite venue for such meetings in the past.

The official told Hutton that the whole future of civilisation as we know it would be seriously threatened if the *Observer* published the story. To his credit, Hutton bid the mandarin a polite goodbye and published the story.

The nervousness of the authorities on this matter is believed to derive from their worries about a certain Mr T, a former MI6 agent who has broken with his former bosses and is causing all sorts of distress by leaking information he thinks should be in the public domain.

PS: In 1992, when the citizens of Blackpool North had no idea that their Tory candidate if elected was likely to work for British intelligence in Serbia as well as themselves in Blackpool, Mr Elletson's majority was 3,040.

MORE on Cardiff Bay, where successive Tory secretaries of state pumped millions into turning disused docks into swanky property developments — and where Welsh secretary Nicholas Edwards, later Lord Crickhowell, was honoured by having a new building named after him (see *Eye* 889).

Crickhowell House was initially the headquarters of the Welsh Health Common Services Authority, but the rent proved too steep. So step forward new tenant Orbit, a Rome-based satellite TV company who will take up a substantial inward investment grant from the Cardiff Bay development corporation if they move into Crickhowell House.

Orbit is owned by a Saudi Arabian company with links to the Saudi royal family. Its most newsworthy antics were in its partnership with BBC Worldwide's Arabic service, which Orbit transmitted live to Saudi. Orbit cut ties with the BBC when it broadcast a documentary about capital punishment in Saudi Arabia. Orbit called the BBC "racist" for showing the programme, and its withdrawal from the partnership left more than 200 BBC employees redundant.

Never mind: at least Lord Crickhowell, who is now a director of Associated British Ports (ABP) which owns the company letting the Cardiff Bay property, will be assured of a steady flow of rent from his new Saudi Arabian tenants.

Meanwhile, a damning secret report on Cardiff Bay has come to light. Written by L&R Leisure, it disputes the development corporation's rosy picture as the bay being a top tourist attraction. It asserts that water behind the barrage will not meet European directives on water standards for bathing, and will thus be unsuitable for windsurfing and water-skiing.

The development will also destroy a site of special scientific interest, home to thousands of waders. And deep within the report L&R Leisure rules out the possibility of creating a freshwater lake with a conservation bias because it would be "incompatible with the value of land on the edge of the water".

PS: Lord Crickhowell, director of ABP, was also chairman of the National Rivers Authority when it nodded through the Cardiff Bay development.

'Backbiter'

NOOKS and CORNERS

WHEN the IRA placed a bomb in the Royal Marines barracks at Deal in Kent, Mrs Thatcher announced that "to close the School of Music now would rip the heart out of Deal". Well, memories are short and, after all, in the asset-stripping modern culture which Mrs Thatcher did so much to promote, making a quick buck is more important than any question of sentiment or civilisation.

Thus the Marines School of Music closed last March and the 42-acre barracks site is now up for sale. And it is being sold in that public-spirited manner familiar from the way hospitals and asylums have been disposed of by the government (*Eyes passim ad nauseam*): sold off quickly to a convenient developer regardless of local need or the quality and potential of the old buildings on the site.

Dereliction, fire, demolition and acres of executive housing usually results. So it will come as no surprise that, without any feasibility study, the ministry of defence is anxious to shift the land quickly — for a mere £2 million or so — to something called United Real Estates in association with Dukeminster.

Deal may be on the coast of Kent but, what with the closure of coal mines, the merging of P&O and Stena Line and the closure of the barracks, it is suffering badly and has 18 percent unemployment. Local opinion, endorsed by the Dover district plan for Deal, wants the military sites to be used to promote economic recovery.

There are, in fact, three distinct sites which deserve different purchasers and different treatment, which, of course, would be too difficult for the MoD to organise. There is also an imaginative scheme — the Academic Initiative Ltd — to use the School of Music buildings for an institute of higher education.

So what does United Real Estates propose to do with all that land? Why, cover it with executive housing — for which there is no demand — and 30,000 square feet of "retail units". What else, in modern Britain? Parliamentary under-secretary for defence Earl Howe considers that: "In the absence of any other sustainable and funded alternative, the UREL bid offers the best chance of succeeding and avoiding the deterioration of the site that we all fear..." Well, he would say that, wouldn't he? And note that last clause. So, with a general election looming, what must triumph is the second rate, the unimaginative, the unwanted. Assets are there to be stripped, after all.

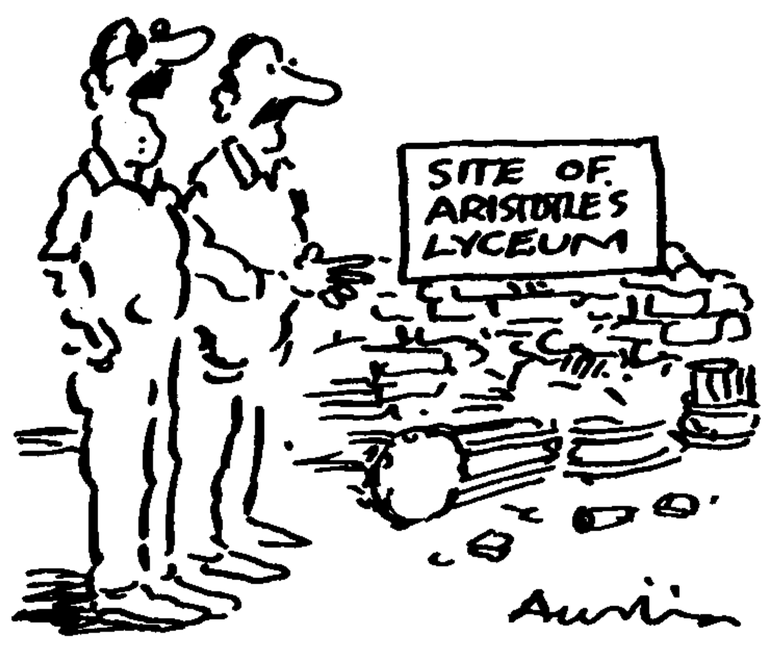
***MY PICTURE** shows a group of rare 17th century red-brick houses in Newington Green. They are listed grade I, and the list description notes that "these houses are extremely rare survivals of pre-Restoration and pre-Great Fire town houses, and are thus one of the most remarkable groups of seventeenth-century buildings in London". But go and see them today and you will find them forlorn and derelict.*

Neglected for years, nos 53-55 Newington Green were — most commendably — rescued by English Heritage some six years ago. Emergency repairs were carried out, new roofs put on and the buildings made secure. In 1994, the houses were offered for sale by informal tender by DTZ Debenham Thorpe on condition that they were restored for residential use. Two bids made it to the short-list: one of £150,000 by a group of enthusiasts who wanted to restore the buildings slowly and comprehensively, and one by a businessman who claimed to have the means to carry out the necessary work immediately.

English Heritage plumped for the — still mysterious — businessman. Since when nothing has happened. The houses have remained vacant and derelict for a further two years and more. Repeated inquiries by the disappointed applicants to English Heritage elicits the response that restoration work is about to begin but, somehow, it never does.

Well, 53-55 Newington Green simply joins that large portfolio of neglected and derelict listed buildings in Britain — except that, in this case, large sums of public money have already been spent to secure their future. So, if there is a scandal, it is that English Heritage — to its intense embarrassment — disposed of the houses it rescued without any proper legal safeguards to ensure that the promised restoration would be carried out by the purchaser. An oversight, I think. But a pity.

'Piloti'



"We found evidence that he set a lot of homework"

My own listening rooms are good examples of the kind of problems and solutions possible in the real world. My large (20ft x 24ft) room has a parquet floor over concrete slab, post-and-beam construction, irregularly shaped walls, a high pyramidal vault, and large openings into other rooms. Without any damping it's far too alive, with noticeable slapback echo off the ceiling, floor bounce, irregular base-frequency leakage and augmentation, and sidewall reflections. Physical solutions to the room's problems included RoomTune Ceiling Clouds in all four corners of the ceiling vault, ASC Tube Traps in the corners of the room behind the speakers and behind the speakers themselves, ASC wall panels behind the listening couch and on the sidewalls of the vault, thick rugs on the floor, and extra blankets on the back of the listening couch. While this treatment eliminated slapback ceiling reflections and attenuated most early reflections over 1kHz, rear-wall bass cancellation and broadband midrange colorations were only slightly improved.

STEVEN STONE
Stereophile

THE COURTESY OF CHOICE

The concept and symbol of *The Courtesy of Choice* reflect the centuries old philosophy that acknowledges differences while allowing them to exist together in harmony.

The Courtesy of Choice accommodates the preferences of individuals by offering both smoking and non-smoking areas in the spirit of conviviality and mutual respect.

A "no-smoking" notice, Hotel Europe, Belfast

The Inca maiden *is my heroine, defrosted by a melting glacier half a millennium after her sacrifice to the volcano Ampato. In the universal scheme of things, she's been gone for a moment, but to me she is so many worlds away that she suggests eternity.*

ANITA RODDICK
Guardian

Pseuds Corner

There is also joke shop humour in the plastic pool of urine made by Mark Pimlott and a sense of distrust in Michael Landy's large red dustbins printed with the words 'Idleness' and 'Disease' and marked by stick men respectively lounging around and throwing up. Matthew Tickle offers up a shrine to the material the walls of which form an entire room of ethereal semi-translucent corrugated plastic. *Ablutions* by Patrick Raynaud offers you the opportunity to dive into sexualised colour transparencies of the body taken at close range and set in plastic washing-up bowls.

Programme, Arnolfini, Bristol

Dean Hughes is showing this ticket, among other works, at the Laure Genillard gallery. Some relate to the two years he spent secretly resewing the upholstery on the buses with carefully chosen threads of the same colour as the pattern: a virtually invisible ritual invented, it seems to me, to hold the world together and re-enforce the commonplace by delicate intrusion — but with a sensible futility which carries a kindness to the shared world.

So this ticket signed by the driver — a celebration of a completed journey of one man. The Cubists used tickets as bits of life that could be stuck down into compositions of artistic merit. This one is left floating, uncertain of its value but allowing us to reconsider those daily rituals that bring us closer to each other and keep art and life going.

ANTHONY GORMLEY
Observer

It is right to say that Oasis can gain our attention without absolute justification, but this does not mean that their status is entirely false. This is because they occupy what Baudrillard calls the *hyperreal*. This is not the unreal any more than it is the absolute real. Rather, it is a dimension of indistinction between (particularly media) representations and what they purport to represent. The real status of hyperrealities is undecidable, because the media image is real (for example, effective, even if not truthful) just as real things are always minimally mediated (for example, televisually).

DR MARTIN MURRAY
Letter to the Independent

CONTRIBUTORS: M.F. Arnold, H. Dunthorne, Chris Young, Anon, Keith Bradnam, Everyone.

£10 paid for entries

EYE TV

TFI Friday (Channel 4)
Pet Power (ITV)
McCallum (ITV)

AS RECENTLY as last week, BBC radio bosses were bullishly insisting that Chris Evans was "on side" and that the latest deal offered to him by Matthew Bannister — for 12 weeks annual holiday — had secured him for at least another year or, rather, 40 weeks.

Predictably, Evans now saw Bannister as the Neville Chamberlain of Broadcasting House and lurched back after Christmas with a demand for every Friday off as well. Friday is the day that Ginge presents his Channel 4 telly show, **TFI Friday**. Chamberlain was minded to give in again but his superiors were reluctant to be seen to accommodate his work with a commercial channel. So Evans will depart in March.

This news will delight Channel 4, which has dreams of running Evans three times a week, adding *TFI Monday* and *TFI Wednesday* slots to the current *TFI Friday*. Well, good luck to them; but they should remember two things. One is that the weekly talk trilogy has derailed at least two British television careers: Terry Wogan's and Jonathan Ross's. And neither of them had the instinct for self-destruction which Evans possesses.

Increasingly he seems the Simon Dee of his day: a man unable to cope with the lifestyle made possible by his broadcasting success. Like a number of professional footballers, he constantly complains of stress and exhaustion which could in large part be solved by staying in more, going to bed earlier and watching what's kept in the fridge. About six weeks after Channel 4 designs its entire schedule around Evans, the dreaded phone call will come in to the office of programme director John Willis: "Chris wants Wednesdays off".

Meanwhile there have been a lot of upbeat newspaper pieces about Anthea Turner, declaring that she has the world at her feet after leaving GMTV. The truth is that she badly needs a hit to justify the huge money Carlton is shelling out on her. **Pet Power** — a chat-show for cute or brave animals and their owners — is another piss-paw product which — just like her first solo outing, *All You Need Is Love*, did far worse in the ratings than Carlton hoped. Anthea's career is in deep doo-doo. The way things are going, she'll be best remembered for the Anthea Turner Fitness and Diet Book.

Elsewhere on ITV advertisers were served up a Monday night set of stories based around the pathologist McCallum, played by John Hannah.

McCallum, piloted at the beginning of last year, jumps on two bandwagons or, in the case of the first one, a trolley. The success of post-mortem drama — Patricia Cornwell's books, the BBC shows *Silent Witness* and *Dangerfield* — led ITV to want its own corpse doctor. To play him, they jumped on another bandwagon, casting the fashionable young actor, John Hannah, famous for reciting Auden beside a coffin in that Hugh Grant film.

The first episode seemed to contain a ludicrous number of references to McCallum's *girlfriend* and the possibility of their having a *baby*. Cynics will feel that a nervous ITV was stressing that Hannah was here playing a straight guy, unlike the gay one in the movie. Even more cynical was the scene in which Hannah was given poetry to recite while contemplating a corpse. Cut it out, as pathologists say.

'Square Eyes'

ONE can only be intrigued by a newspaper advertisement offering "big bucks" for "videos of BBC1's *A Time To Dance*, written by Melvyn Bragg and shown in three parts in 1991".

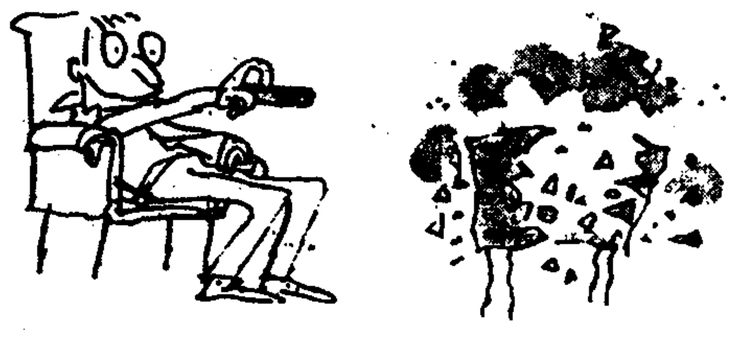
Is Buckingham Palace doing some final undercover research before agreeing Melvyn's long overdue KBE in the dissolution honours' list? Alas, the newspaper is the *Sport* and the phone number given (0161 238 8181) is that of the sadly unartistic David Sullivan.

One fears a serious breach of copyright law is imminent, leading to Melvyn's work featuring unfavourably in various top-shelf publications and videotapes. In particular, the charming Dervla Kirwan, of *Ballykissangel* fame, who starred in the drama, seems set for renewed exposure. This is despite her recent admission that "I feel I was exploited" by the demands of Bragg's resolutely non-autobiographical script — ie 18 year old has sex with 54 year old in Cumbria and Volvo. It's a cruel business, drama.

THE relationship between the BBC and British Airways continues to improve despite last year's unsporting attempts by Martin Gregory to investigate malpractice at "the World's Favourite Airline" for *Newsnight*.

Happily for BA, the item was axed by John Birt, a friend of BA chief executive Bob Ayling, ensuring that nothing would disrupt the new "bonding".

Now, "bonding" has reached a new level of intimacy. January's issue of *Around Resources*, a PR handout from BBC Resources, includes a piece by "Bonking" Rod Lynch about the need for change — ie the need to privatise BBC Resources. Its headline, "No Easy Way To Change", was supplied by BA: "The headline comes from the October edition of *BA News*, in which Chief Executive Bob Ayling spells out why change must continue at British Airways despite its annual profits of hundreds of millions of pounds" — a ringing endorsement of the goals of public sector broadcasting.



VIRGINIA Bottomley's decision to replace Sir George Russell as chairman of the Independent Television Commission (ITC) with another household name, Sir Robin Biggam, is likely to boost still further the fortunes of Camelot, the company burdened with the difficult task of selling lottery tickets.

Camelot executives loathe the BBC's Saturday lottery show, tremble at the prospect of a second, Wednesday edition from the start of mid-week draws next month, and are desperate to move it to ITV.

A co-production by Carlton and LWT could hardly be less entertaining (unless it's hosted by Philip Scofield) and, although only of minor importance to the lottery operator, the ITV network centre can afford to pay Camelot a bigger fee for broadcasting a glorified commercial than the BBC.

However, until now a switch was out of the question: Russell was not only the ITC's chairman, but Camelot's as well. Biggam's arrival as ITV regulator means that the BBC can be speedily ditched without embarrassing publicity.

MEDIA NEWS

CHANNEL 4 must, as part of its unique broadcasting remit, make special efforts to nurture minorities and support the underdog. So it hardly came as a surprise when C4 staff were officially "encouraged" to use minority airline British Midland in their travels around the UK.

Such altruistic support for the underdog will no doubt be welcomed by Channel 4 chairman Sir Michael Bishop. And, for that matter, by the chairman of British Midland — Sir Michael, er, Bishop.

BBC staff are bracing themselves for a consultation process called MIDAS — a joint project between Coopers & Lybrand, the huge accountancy firm, and EDS, the American computer firm with lots of lucrative UK government contracts here in Britain.

MIDAS is intended to introduce a common financial system for the whole BBC, and to try to standardise business processes within it. Employees' nervousness presumably arises in part from literature on the project which explains that EDS's most "notable" contract was the "operation of a £1.2 billion IT contract for the Inland Revenue".

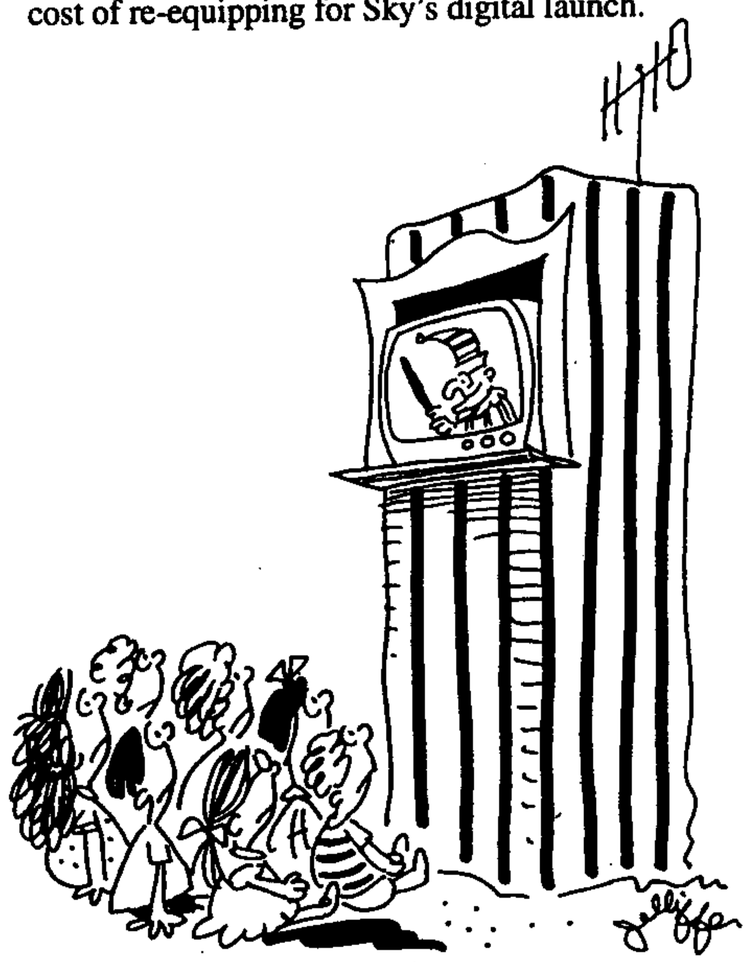
Oh dear. As *Eye* readers know, the project to introduce tax self-assessment is already running millions of pounds over budget, and it got off to a flying start by sending out incorrect statements to taxpayers asking them for payment by 31 July instead of the correct date, 31 January.

ALTHOUGH Carlton picked up more abuse, the great royal phone-in created even more problems for Rupert Murdoch.

Similar audience participation exercises (ie dirt cheap programmes) will fill many of the 200-odd digital channels planned for later this year, and phone-ins to these shows, run by News Corporation's Broadsystem subsidiary, will be an important source of revenue.

Alas Carlton sub-contracted its monarchy debate to Broadsystem which, despite Murdoch's huge investment, was unable to cope with the volume of calls. This is particularly surprising given that all that was required was a simple count of the number of calls to each of two numbers. Instead, thousands of those attempting to vote were left frustrated by a constant engaged tone.

Apart from clouding the result, at the night-time premium rate Broadsystem lost about 2p for each failed attempt to vote, and its clients at ITV around 8p or 9p. Not significant individual sums — calls that did get through yielded £270,000 — but any loss of revenue at the UK business must infuriate Murdoch who appears unusually unnerved by the cost of re-equipping for Sky's digital launch.



HOW THEY ARE RELATED

MICHAEL COVENEY, the preening drama critic of the *Observer*, turned up in *The Stage* newspaper two weeks ago with a furious attack on the incompetence of West End theatre publicists. But, as a letter in last week's *Stage* pointed out, one name was conspicuously absent from his list of offenders — Sue Hyman, the PR woman responsible for *Starlight Express* and other theatrical atrocities.

La Hyman must have been gratified to escape, while all her rivals were so comprehensively slagged off. No doubt she will convey her thanks in person to Coveney — who, by an amazing coincidence, is her husband.

ART NEWS

A SERIES of defeats and disasters has done nothing to diminish the empire-building zeal of Tim Clifford, the flamboyant director of the National Galleries of Scotland.

Back in the early 1990s he cooked up a hare-brained plan for a Gallery of Scottish Art in Glasgow, aided and abetted by two powerful supporters on his board of trustees: business tycoon Lord MacFarlane of Bearsden and millionaire banker Angus Grossart. As we reported (*Eye* 907), the scheme met with almost universal condemnation.

Some critics complained that it would mean the closure of the well-respected Scottish Portrait Gallery in Edinburgh. Others pointed out that Clifford's own national galleries were supposed to be a showcase for Scottish art, among other things. And in May 1994 Scottish secretary Ian Lang made his disapproval plain by refusing to contribute any public money to the running costs.

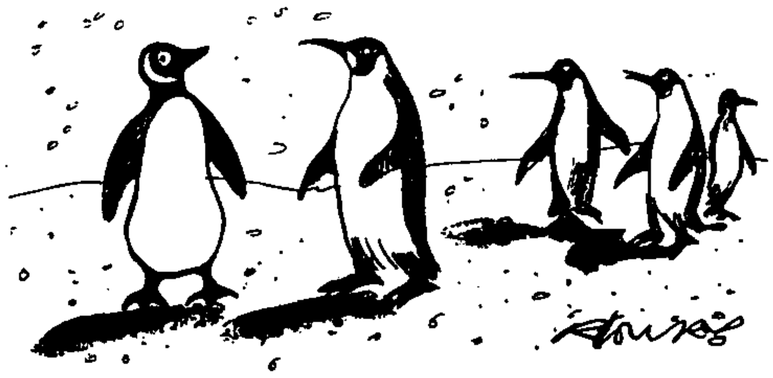
Undaunted by these setbacks, Clifford, Grossart and MacFarlane pressed on, and last year found a site for their white elephant — the old post office building in Glasgow. Never mind that it was far too big and expensive for their purposes: they applied for £30 million of lottery dosh to subsidise their folly.

Alas! Last month the National Heritage Memorial Fund, chaired by Lord Rothschild, rejected the application. End of story? Not at all. Last Friday the *Scotsman* reported that the National Gallery's Trustees were submitting another begging letter to the fund — for a more modest £25 million — and were hopeful of success this time.

This came as a surprise to most of the trustees, who were due to meet later that day. As it was their first discussion since the lottery bid was turned down, they had had no chance to decide whether or not to try again. And yet here it was being reported as a *fait accompli*. How could this be?

The previous day, by an interesting coincidence, Lord Rothschild had had a meeting in Glasgow with two prominent members of the Clifford cabal — Pat Lally, Provost of Glasgow, and the ubiquitous Angus Grossart. What was there to talk about? What business had the Provost of Glasgow with the future of the National Galleries that was so important that it pre-empted any discussion by the trustees? And how will Rothschild, the chairman of the NHMF, respond impartially to a new application from the trustees if he has been a party to the discussions that formulated it?

Meanwhile, having already spent close to a million pounds on the project, the National Gallery now finds it hasn't the money to fund a pay rise promised to its employees. Clifford explains that the "shortfall" is £35,000. Yet he has just splashed out twice that sum on an item of furniture for the gallery. The staff, who are threatening to strike, suggest that before pursuing his madcap schemes in Glasgow he might care to put his own house in order. On past form, however, he seems unlikely to do anything of the kind.



"One's a Penguin Modern Classic and the other one made his fortune selling biscuits, but I don't know which is which."

OUR piece in *Eye* 913 about the gala performance of *Cats* in aid of the Animal Help Society was barking (*sic*) up the wrong tree.

We suggested that Cameron Mackintosh Limited had unfairly produced theatre programmes in competition with the charity, that it had not provided free seats it had promised and that Andrew Lloyd-Webber and Cameron Mackintosh had refused to donate the charity a painting.

In fact the company had made it clear the seats must be paid for at a discounted price, that the *Cats* programme would be sold on the night and, er, the charity was given the painting. It is therefore not surprising that Cameron Mackintosh Limited is pursuing the £2,500 owed for seats.

HACKWATCH: AGONY

JUST when staff at the *Sunday Mirror* thought it was safe to smile again, their old editor Eve Pollard has returned to haunt them — as the paper's new agony aunt. "Well, she was pretty good at dispensing agony when she was here," commented one of the five sub-editors who have threatened to quit if they are instructed to handle la Bollard's copy.

A small consolation for the staff has been the discovery that Eve was not the first choice for the job, but came from behind when she offered to do it for less than any of the other contenders. Now that neither Bollard nor her hubby, Sir Nick Lloyd, is editing a national newspaper, perhaps she needs whatever work she can find.

Hacks who suffered under her editorship are now submitting letters to the "Dear Eve" column, seeking her expert advice. A few samples:

"Dear Eve, I'm the sports editor of a national newspaper and we have a woman editor who keeps sending me out to buy her sanitary towels. Could I be sacked if I refuse?"

"Dear Eve, I'm the chauffeur to a woman boss and she sent me to her home the other day to pick up a pair of clean knickers. There weren't any and I was told to go back and wash some. Is this a health risk?" Etc. etc.

None of these missives has yet been answered. But in her first few weeks on the job she has already given plenty of useful tips, based on her vast experience.

How to dress (part one)

"I'm 24, slim and single, with a good figure," a young woman writes to Eve. "My problem is my boyfriend — who moans like hell when I wear anything slightly sexy… I like short skirts — not mini-skirts, just ones which are over the knee — and fitted tops. But he says: 'Where do you think you're going dressed like that?' "

Eve's reply is concise and constructive: "Take it from someone older. There is only a certain time we women have to dress exactly as we like. It goes fast." Presumably this cannot be the same amply-proportioned Eve Pollard who — although the wrong side of 50 — still favours plunging necklines and little black dresses.

How to dress (part two)

"I am in my forties," a female reader writes. "I used to be very attractive and men noticed me. Now I don't get the same reaction. I am heart-broken about it." Eve offers her all-purpose solution: get tarted up. "Have you settled into cosy frocks or dull outfits? You don't want to be mutton dressed as lamb, but take a look around at some of the younger shops. Don't give up."

Keeping your man

A woman fears that her husband is falling for their "very attractive and vivacious" female neighbour. "What can I do?" she pleads. As ever, auntie Eve has only one answer: get tarted up. "When did you last dress up for him? Yes, it may be laughable, but many men are flattered if you wear something sexy for them alone. When you pull on exciting lingerie you may not look like the model on the packet. Few of us do. But to him you'll be exciting and it will turn him on…" As Sir Nicholas Lloyd would no doubt be happy to confirm.

Loving your imperfections

A 24-year-old woman says that her boyfriend makes unflattering comments "on the shape of my thighs, boobs and stomach, which really upsets me. What should I do?" Eve is happy to help: "Look at women around you — even the ones with highly imperfect thighs, boobs and stomach are loved!" Who can she have in mind?

Sisterly solidarity

A woman whose husband has lost his job complains that her best female friend never offers her any support. Eve dispenses reassurance: "We women are often the butt of jokes because we chatter so much. Men say this is merely a talent for gossip. We know it's all about being sensitive to one another's needs… I would be lost without my girlfriends."

This feminist manifesto will strike a chord with many of the women who worked under La Bollard at the *Sunday Express* — including Gill Morgan, Jane Owen, Sophie Chaimier, Ruth Chatto, Jill Crawshaw, Elizabeth Grice, Sophie Grigson, Aileen O'Brien, Diane Spencer, Mary Wilson, Daphne Broadhead and Aggie Mackenzie. Bollard proved so "sensitive" to their needs that they were all sacked, forced to resign or driven from their jobs.

Dirty old men

A woman is "shattered" to find that her husband has three porn magazines hidden in the airing cupboard. Eve, being a woman of the world, is unimpressed: "Only three? Many men, whether they are having sex a dozen times a day or not, own these magazines." How does she know?

Bonking With Bollard

In the *Times* last week, Sir Nick Lloyd grumbled about the ghastliness of female columnists. One wonders what he makes of his wife's new column, particularly the weekly "In Bed With Eve" section, in which milady lets us into some of her own bedroom secrets.

"Okay, so the weather's icy cold, but it doesn't have to put your sex life in the deep freeze too," she wrote on 5 January. "You can dress sexily — and keep warm — in bed. Sure, socks are a real passion-killer. But sexy hold-up stockings will take the chill off your legs — and may even make your partner's mercury rise as well… And if you really have to wear something long, don't settle for a shapeless passion-killing T-shirt, choose anything so long as it's see-through…"

On 12 January, she got even more physical. "Skin is the most erogenous part of the body. It contains all those delicate nerve endings that love to be stroked, caressed and pampered. Not just the obvious bits — but necks, backs of knees, inside elbows and inner thighs are all highly sensitive."

Last Sunday, she waxed lyrical about the delights of a good snog. "Kissing can, to my mind, be even more intimate than sex… Many men complain that after a few years together their partners don't go in for passionate tongue-and-groovy smackers." But not Sir Nick, lucky chap.

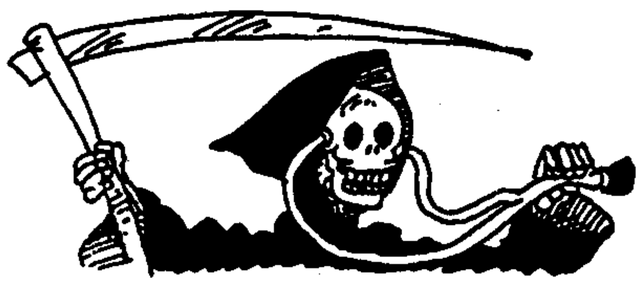
The younger generation

Many of Eve's female correspondents seem to be the same age. "Dear Eve, I am 24…" (5 Jan.) "Dear Eve, I'm 24, slim and single…" (5 Jan.) "As an attractive 24-year-old…" (12 January.) Sir Nick Lloyd's daughter Rachel is also 24, and she works for the *People*, sister paper of the *Sunday Mirror*. But it would be quite wrong to assume that she is responsible for any of the letters from love-lorn 24-year-olds to her stepmum — such as the one which began: "Until recently, I was enjoying a passionate affair with my boss, a 45-year-old divorcé with a son my age."

Ageing lotharios

Yet *another* 24-year-old woman writes in, this time complaining that her 38-year-old boyfriend "is always telling me about his past lovers and compares me with them". Eve advises the no-nonsense approach: "When Craig next starts complaining about your sexual ability try telling him about medical research which has established that men reach their sexual peak at 17, so he is well past his…" Sir Nicholas Lloyd is 54.

"Now… personality. Would you say you were (a) Queen Bitch from hell, (b) a slapper or (c) a bit mumsy?"



DOING THE ROUNDS

THE winter chaos in the NHS is now so predictable it could be deemed a British tradition. Each year brings "an unprecedented rise in emergency admissions", and with 14 percent of acute beds closed in London since 1991 (double the national average), the capital has been particularly hard hit.

Guy's hospital has launched an inquiry into the death of a woman on 4 January after her heart bypass surgery was cancelled four times "because of staff sickness and the rise in medical emergencies". **Dartford and Gravesham trust** is looking into why it took five hours to transfer a patient with pneumonia and heart failure from the **Queen Elizabeth hospital** to **Margate's Queen Mother hospital** on new year's eve (he was pronounced dead shortly after *arrival).*

The bed crisis in **Leeds**, which led to heart attack victim Edna Harrison being ferried around for four hours before being found a bed 60 miles away in **Hull**, despite the fact that she lived in the shadow of **Jimmys** — is set to get worse rather than better. With Jimmys and **Leeds General Infirmary** overflowing with flu victims, many emergency cases have in recent weeks been sent to the city's smaller **Killingbeck Hospital**. This option won't be available next winter — because Killingbeck is to close in the autumn, despite a public campaign to keep it open. No wonder John Major refused to answer reporters' questions on the issue during his recent visit to Leeds.

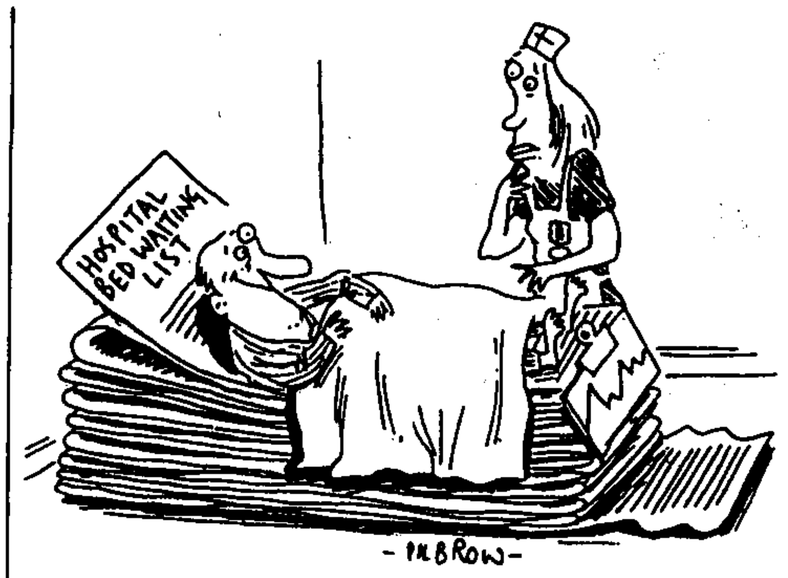
And **Wellhouse trust, north London**, has launched an appeal for extra nurses to help with the extra emergencies. Staff sickness is currently running at 11 percent.

● SOME patients must still have faith in the NHS — or no money to pay for the mirage of better private healthcare. The number of people taking out private health insurance has fallen by one million since 1990 and, with premiums rising above inflation, the trend looks set to continue. While NHS patients are being piled high on corridor trolleys, the average bed occupancy rate in private hospitals is now less than 50 percent, with some barely filling a third.

● THE **National Hospital for Aesthetic (i.e. private) Plastic Surgery** in **Bromsgrove** is having particular problems. It has closed temporarily after a breast reduction operation was cancelled twice at the last minute. On the first occasion, the surgeon's insurance cover was out of date, and on the second the patient made it to the operating theatre but had to turn round again due to lack of anaesthetic. She was then given a refund cheque of £5,000 — which bounced three times. Police are making inquiries...

● **ST ANTHONY's** (private) hospital, **Cheam**, has at least benefited from the NHS bed crisis. Retired nurse Mary Vaughan was rushed to **St Helier NHS trust** in **Sutton** on 6 January with a chest infection. After 24 hours (three hours to lie down, 21 hours on a trolley) she decided she could wait no longer for a bed and booked into St Anthony's (£500 a night before treatment). She is now trying to claim the money back. St Helier casualty had to be closed to adult emergencies between 2pm on 6 January to 9am on 7 January because of "an unprecedented rise in emergencies".

● THREE quarters of local authorities now admit that there is "bed blocking" in their hospitals by patients who are medically fit for discharge but can't be moved because there isn't enough care (ie cash) in the community. The NHS executive has estimated that at least 6,000 beds are now blocked in England alone.



● MD has received a flood of calls for clarification about VAT on NHS incontinence aids (*Eye last*). Last August, customs and excise deemed that VAT should be charged on all such aids, when previously trusts had rightly been able to apply for zero rating. One firm of manufacturers, SCA Molnlycke, appealed against the ruling and won an exemption for trusts who supply incontinence pads to patients in their own homes, and to nursing home patients who are "of sound mind". Perversely, VAT will still be charged on pads supplied to residential homes because they aren't going direct to specified patients. SCA Molnlycke and customs and excise have until February to appeal, until which time VAT will still apply. If you would like to join the "VAT off all Pads" Campaign, please write to MD.

GOOD NEWS

● WELSH pharmacist Allan Sharpe, who dispenses prescriptions at less than the government's imposed fee of £5.50, has had the case against him for breaching NHS rules dropped.

M.D.

DOWN ON THE FARM

NORTH of the border there was much excitement last week with the publication of the Pennington report on the Lanarkshire *E coli* outbreak, the story being carried on the front page of all the Scottish dailies.

Less interest was expressed by the English papers, however, leading to wry comments that if the outbreak had been in the Home Counties, rather than the obscure town of Wishaw, the "national" media would have had a field day.

Nevertheless, Prof Pennington's report will almost certainly have considerable impact on the nation as a whole. While much of what he has to say is good commonsense, one area he has been steered clear of addressing is why the outbreak happened in the first place. Yet, from his report, it is abundantly clear that the main cause was cross contamination arising from the lack of separation between cooked and raw meats at the butcher's shop from which the outbreak originated — and that this arose from a less than perfect layout.

The faults that gave rise to the outbreak would thus have been clearly apparent to any skilled inspector who had visited the unit prior to the outbreak and, had they been remedied, it is equally clear the outbreak would not have occurred. Yet after no visit prior to the outbreak had local environmental health officers demanded these crucial changes. Therefore, by any account, the Lanarkshire food police bear as much responsibility for the outbreak at Mr Barr the butcher.

However, even with Pennington safely out of the way, officials are taking no chance that they will be blamed for the outbreak. By initiating a prosecution against Mr Barr, they have effectively neutralised the promised fatal accident inquiry which cannot proceed until court hearings are over, and the nature of the charge of "reckless endangerment" prevents officials being implicated.

Altogether the Barr incident is degenerating rapidly into a grand Scottish establishment stitch-up, with the only winners being the officials who are walking away with more powers, more money — and blameless reputations.

ANOTHER stitch-up successfully concluded is the European parliamentary committee report on BSE.

Originally limited in scope to examine the extent to which European laws on BSE were obeyed, the inquiry which spawned the report has extended its brief to examine Britain's handling of the affair — over which it has no jurisdiction.

In criticising Britain, however, the committee is being highly selective about the status of BSE in other EU countries. Portugal, for instance, is rumoured to be finding nearly 500 cases a week, but has been told by the EU commission keep quiet about it.

But what gives the game away completely is not so much the BSE reports from our EU partners, but the nil-reports. In the UK, about a third of live animals initially suspected of suffering from BSE are subsequently found on laboratory diagnosis to be suffering from some other brain disease. Any country looking diligently for BSE will also find these diseases and will report high numbers of suspect BSE even where there is no BSE at all.

When countries like Germany, France and Holland are failing to report any "suspects" *at all*, it becomes very clear that there is no systematic monitoring for BSE in these countries: the BSE problem is simply being buried.

Meanwhile, the Edinburgh CJD surveillance unit has been stoking up alarm in the press with predictions of "100,000 new cases of the disease". However, only in the small print can it be discerned that this scenario depends on there having been 32 cases of "new" strain CJD last year. Only one has been reported.

FURTHER evidence has emerged of the good faith of the Dutch when it comes to food safety.

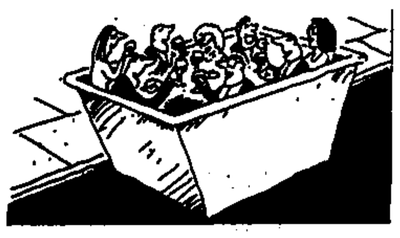
Recent grand jury proceedings in the United States have identified a massive smuggling racket into the US, supplying illegal growth hormones and other drugs to the cattle trade. The main supplier and "Mr Big" is named as Dutchman Gerard Hoggendyke, for whom a request for extradition has been lodged with the Dutch authorities... to which there has been as yet no response.

'New Muckspreader'

Old Macdonald

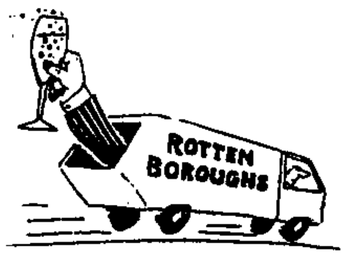
ALBERT

YOU CAN ALWAYS RELY ON FARMIN' FOLK IN AN EMERGENCY GEORGE!
WELL, WE GOT OVER JUST AS SOON AS WE SPOTTED THE SMOKE FROM YOUR BARN VERA!
AN' THANK HEAVEN YOU DID!
...BUGGER ALMOST WENT OUT!
GLEBE INSURANCE



THE
Rotten Borough Advertiser

Friday, 24th January 1997



EYE TOLD YOU SO...

HACKNEY councillor Hettie Peters, the former Labour social services chair who was victim of a smear campaign, has been cleared of five charges of fraudulently obtaining housing benefit worth £1,038 from Westminster council after the trial judge threw the case out.

The *Eye* has been explaining for more than a year now how Peters was framed while various Hackney Labour politicians steadfastly maintained her guilt.

The smear campaign began in October 1995 when an anonymous memo accused her of running a brothel at a flat in Gloucester Place, and of fraudulently claiming housing benefit from Westminster council at the address. The rumours were put about by Hackney Labour councillors who were annoyed that Peters supported Bernard Crofton, the beleaguered housing boss framed by Labour councillors on trumped-up grounds of racism (*Eyes passim*).

Peters, a member of the Crofton tribunal, made many enemies by voting for his reinstatement. But her worst "crime" was to uncover the Hackney Labour cover-up protecting Mark Trotter, the child abusing social worker who died of AIDS. A clique of councillors, intent on revenge, convinced Knacker that Peters had fiddled her housing benefit and told her she would be arrested if she went to Westminster town hall to sort it out. Sure enough, when she voluntarily went to the council building Knacker arrested her, frogmarched her to her Hackney home, searched it without a warrant and threw her into a cell for a day.

But there was more. For several weeks Peters was followed by a member of the council's audit tenancy team. She also received death threats. Then there was the so-called "reference" which claimed she earnt £28,457 from the Hackney Women's Centre and so could afford to rent a nearby flat: the *Eye* showed how the letter had been forged (by a vindictive fellow Labour councillor); the salary was nonexistent and the flat was her sister's.

Her acquittal will disappoint old-style Labour acolytes of former leader John McCafferty who used the charges against Peters to smear her supporters and those who left the Labour group in disgust over the Crofton and Trotter affairs. The 16 Labour councillors who resigned the whip are to call for an inquiry into who tried to frame Peters. The fall out from the attempted stitch-up of the Queensbridge ward councillor has also led to the resignation of Labour's ward secretary Jerry Saunders, who has accused councillors Tony Allen and Peter Watson of "hounding Hettie Peters from office".

IN BRIEF

MURKEYSIDE: The ruling Labour group's Christmas party degenerated into a punch-up between council leader Frank Prendergast and "new" Labour stalwart Chris Newby, chair of the direct services organisation. Newby says Prendergast hit him twice in the face and called him a ***** ****. Prendergast's supporters say Newby picked up a chair with which to clobber his fellow councillor over the head. This uncomradely behaviour was *odd* given the council's ban on its staff bringing booze on to the premises in the holiday period. The rules apparently did not apply to the councillors, who were all so tired and emotional a true picture of events will probably never emerge.**

BORDERS: "Gentlemen" on this Scottish council outnumber women councillors 58 to eight — and it shows. In Jedburgh two of them want the local shelter for battered women to be moved to another town. Independent Tom Dobson and Lib Dem Bobby Rutherford say it is upsetting neighbours and lowering property prices. For good measure Dobson added that some battered women "probably deserve it because they are not very desirable people".

ISLINGTON: The health and safety executive wants to grill council officers over the asbestos-riddled former Hornsey Road baths which the council closed in 1991. Islington knew of the asbestos problem there since 1988 when it hired workmen to mend crumbling amosite asbestos in air cooling ducts and signed the work off as having been completed before it was finished. There was no further test before the pool was closed, so for three years asbestos fibres may well have circulated through the air system, possibly endangering the lives of more than 100,000 swimmers, many of them children.

SERVICETEAM WITH A SMILE

WHY has leftie Lambeth awarded its contract for direct works to Serviceteam, which was sacked from collecting rubbish in right-wing Wandsworth?

Serviceteam lost its contract after Wandsworth received 26,000 complaints from residents in one year. The firm had enforced a six-day working week on employees, sacked eight dustmen and even accused them of vandalism and malpractice. Despite this Serviceteam will be responsible for 18 areas of work in Lambeth, including street light and sewerage maintenance.

Observers were surprised that the giant firm SITA, which had been told it was the preferred candidate, was beaten by Serviceteam. But then Serviceteam does have excellent contacts in the close-knit world of Labour-run London boroughs.

It began life at Lewisham council. Its first business director was Lewisham Labour councillor David Sullivan; its company secretary is Mike Boult, who formerly worked for Lewisham council; and its managing director is Mushtaq Malik, formerly an officer at Lewisham council. Malik, in particular, has many Labour contacts: not long ago he was having in-depth Ugandan discussions with Heather Rabbatts, chief executive of the formerly Labour, now hung council in Lambeth that is employing Serviceteam.

SITA is considering taking its case to judicial review.

PS: Lambeth staff giving evidence to the panel investigating corruption at Tooting Bec Gardens hostel for the homeless (*Eyes* 913, 914) are clamming up after a decision was made to tape the interviews. Witnesses recall that at the recent industrial tribunal, which found Lambeth guilty of victimising two whistleblowers and led to the current inquiry, some of those who gave evidence faced intimidation. The tactics allegedly used to persuade witnesses not to testify included dead birds and envelopes of excrement being put through letterboxes.

Some housing managers who "acted unlawfully" are feeling vulnerable after councillors, in a rare display of unity, called for the guilty to be punished. One area of investigation will doubtless be any manager who admitted to the tribunal "being caught with their pants down" while on duty at the hostel. Even in Lambeth, it seems, it is gross misconduct to have nookie on council premises — even more so if it is with persons who are supposedly vulnerable.

AND SO TO BEDFORD...

MORE on Bedford council and the corruption cases against Coun Mike Cotter, Labour group leader, and Nicholas O'Regan, officer in charge of economic development.

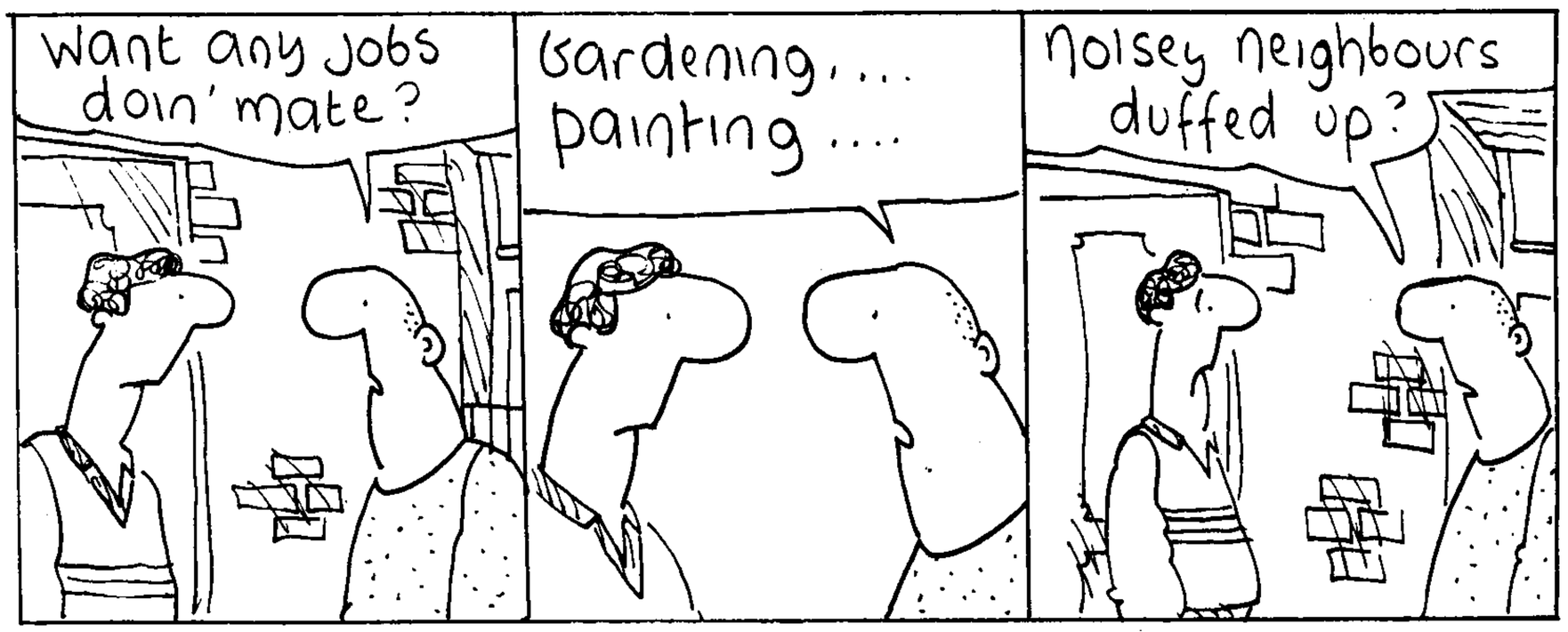
As the *Eye* reported last year, an odd letter arrived by fax at the council offices from a European lobbying firm called Andersson, Elfers, Felix (AEF). It appeared to offer a councillor an inducement to sign a contract with AEF, a firm specialising in helping local authorities win European grants.

In April last year Cotter and O'Regan were charged with corruption. The case is expected at crown court this summer. The men got an unexpected Christmas present last month, however, when Roger Wilson, the borough's director of planning and the suspected whistle-blower, died suddenly on Boxing Day aged 52.

Wilson had been suspended for 13 months on the spurious charge of not immediately handing over the AEF letter — it mysteriously arrived on his fax machine late one night — to the proper authorities. He would have been an important prosecution witness. In the past year he had faced a number of investigations himself, including a blackmail charge and an Inland Revenue investigation, both of which were chucked out.

A couple of hours after Wilson's funeral the council approved a working party decision to make his post redundant. Two Labour councillors voted against this — Bob Elford and Julie Sturges — and they now face possible disciplinary action from the party.

HUSBAND



Letters

Sins of the father

Sir,

Making jokes about Jerry Hayes' alleged homosexuality is a puerile activity, but one to be expected in a satirical magazine. Putting his children on the cover of your magazine, however, is quite another thing and is damn out of order. I suggest you join the tabloids in your Street of Shame for an unwarranted invasion of the two children's privacy, done in the worst possible taste.

Yours, very disappointed,
RICHARD BARTHOLOMEW,
Hastings, E. Sussex.

Sir,

I realise the boundaries of taste have become elastic to the point where they do not register on any scale of empathy. However, was it absolutely necessary to feature the unfortunate MP's children on your 10 January cover? — I think not.

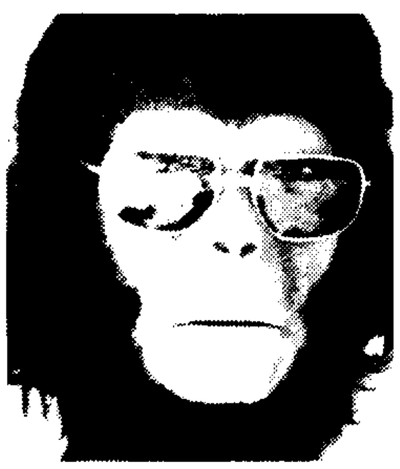
Yours faithfully,
ALLEN LEVY,
London W11.

Sir,

I am a subscriber to your magazine and have been for donkeys years. Re: your most recent issue and the front cover. Mr Hayes is a public figure and fair game, but it's not very nice to see his wife and young kiddies splattered all over the front cover. I know you have got to be cruel sometimes, and upset people. But having them all over the front cover was not necessary.

Yours faithfully,
BILL EDWARDS,
Kingston, Surrey.

Lookalike



Richard Branson

Roddy McDowell

Sir,

I wondered if by any chance Richard Branson's recent failure to circumnavigate the globe in a balloon is related to Professor Cornelius' inability to grasp the concept of flight in PLANET OF THE APES*?*

I think we should be told.

Yours sincerely,
CLARE LISTER,
London W8.

Ship mates

Sir,

Bookworm is an absolute shit. His review of THE YELLOW ADMIRAL *by Patrick O'Brian is witty and to a large extent justified. But I must be one of many readers of both your magazine and Mr O'Brian's novels who are absolutely furious to have the ending of his latest book revealed by Bookworm.*

I curse the wretched man.

Yours faithfully,
D.S. THEOPHILUS,
London SW15.

Sir,

*Your Literary Reviewer (*EYE *915) is of course entitled to argue that Patrick O'Brian is a minor writer: what he (he is clearly a "he") is not entitled to do is to imply that O'Brian is racist ("no pretending that wogs are as good as us"). This is rubbish: no one who has read the Jack Aubrey novels with the slightest attention could believe that for a minute.*

Aubrey himself has a much-loved illegitimate black son — a Catholic priest who has his father's features "transposed to a different key" — and in THE COMMODORE, *Aubrey promotes an officer of black descent, reflecting as he does that race has become an issue in the new Navy: in the old 18th century Navy, race didn't matter at all. Like his great model Jane Austen, O'Brian is virtually colour blind. Jane Austen had at least one black leading character, the mulatto heiress Miss Lambe in* SANDITON*; there were many Miss Lambes in Regency society, and their descendants are among the "toffs" your reviewer absurdly describes as O'Brian's core market.*

As for the ordinary sailors, Aubrey's various warships are stuffed with men of every hue, from Mayo and Maine to Dahomey and Borneo (Wapping English serving as a lingua franca), a fair reflection of the racial composition of Nelson's fighting ships.

Your reviewer's views on sex ("no women with careers") and class ("an unbreakable order of rank") in the novels are also untenable. Aubrey is taught mathematics by Queenie Thrale, and Miss Herschel shows him how to build a telescope, and O'Brian frequently demonstrates that, as with race, the class lines are becoming more exclusive, but this is not a matter for approval on either the author's or Aubrey's part: Aubrey's navy was still one in which a common seaman whipped round the fleet could end up as an admiral, but such figures were increasingly anomalous.

Also, it's worth pointing out that far from being an apologist for Things As They Were, O'Brian frequently portrays establishment icons of English life in a less than kindly light, from Shakespeare (O'Brian seems to be the first writer since Max Beerbohm to exploit the comic possibilities of Shakespeare's dreadful puns) to the jury system.

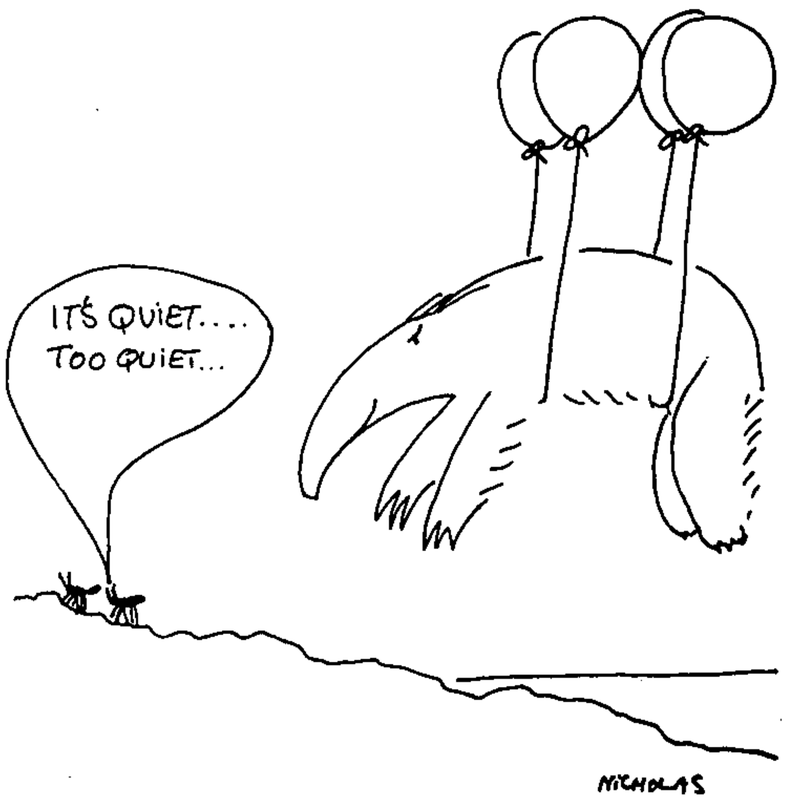
O'Brian is a gloriously talented writer, and like George MacDonald Fraser is an unacknowledged national treasure. In the cultural desert of modern fiction, we have so few writers of the first rank that it would be criminal if people were put off reading O'Brian by your reviewer's highly misleading piece. Read him! Apart from anything else, he is one of the wittiest writers in the language.

Yours faithfully,
EDWIN MOORE,
Glasgow.

Sir,

Re: Your review of Patrick O'Brian's THE YELLOW ADMIRAL. *What a sad, mean spirited character your reviewer seems to be.*

Yours,
R. WEEDON,
Ashton-U-Lyne, Lancs.



Ice lolly

Sir,

While I do not go along with the more fanciful speculation that Richmond Town Hall has a double O department with agents out to terminate Richard Meacock, Coun Williams is being somewhat disingenuous in his attempt to distance himself from the closure of our internationally renowned ice rink.

It may be strictly correct to say that the private owners were responsible, but what he ignores is that they only did it because his council granted permission for the site to be redeveloped as flats — contrary to its own guidelines which asserted that the area should be used for leisure facilities, not over-abundant in this borough.

OK there was an initial attempt to make the developers provide a new ice rink elsewhere, but the council was soon persuaded to waive this for a small payment much of which was not even used for other leisure facilities but just put into general town hall funds.

Yours faithfully,
RODNEY BENNETT,
Richmond, Surrey.

Well connected

Sir,

Can you thank BT for me please for that great advert they're running which features the squaddie in Bosnia and his gutted family?

Not only is it upsetting for those involved to watch, but now families will be expecting phone calls — at £1 a minute.

Maybe BT have connected some soldiers somewhere in theatre, but everywhere I've been it's run by the Americans. Then again, I've only been here six months and visited six camps.

As a comparison, mail can get up-county inside three days from posting, costs national rates (inc parcels) and forces aerogrammes (this bluey is one) are free to obtain and free to post both ways.

Yours sincerely,
NAME AND ADDRESS SUPPLIED.

Health and efficiency

Sir,

In a recent edition of the EYE *you make reference to Professor Eric Caines and the events at the University of Nottingham.*

I wonder if I could prevail upon you to put the record straight.

I continue to contribute to the work of the Centre for Health Service Management and no one from the university authorities has asked me to leave.

In connection with my service as chairman of the Homewood NHS Trust; I was appointed for a period of four years, fulfilled my contract and merged Homewood with the local community trust. I did not seek the chairmanship of the merged organisation hence there was no contract to renew.

Additionally, I have always been, and will remain, committed to an NHS that is free at the point of access and comprehensive in its meeting of needs. Indeed I have described the possibility of "privatising" the NHS as a poll-tax in bandages — it would be a daft idea.

Thank you,
ROY LILLEY,
Address supplied.

I-SPY

NSW, Australia

Submitted by Keith Marner. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Head count

Sir,

Your articles concerning Marie Younie and her "persecution" at the hands of Belfairs Community College's governors (Footnotes, EYE *884 & 915) bring some immediate questions to mind.*

Why did the number of pupils wishing to enter the school in Year 7 drop from a healthy 9 Form entry (270 students) to a meagre 5 Form entry (150 students) during her time as head? Why was there a mass exodus of staff from a school that had previously had stable movement? Why was a colleague with a strong London accent hounded out of her job? Why did a happy school suddenly become a school full of fear and paranoia?

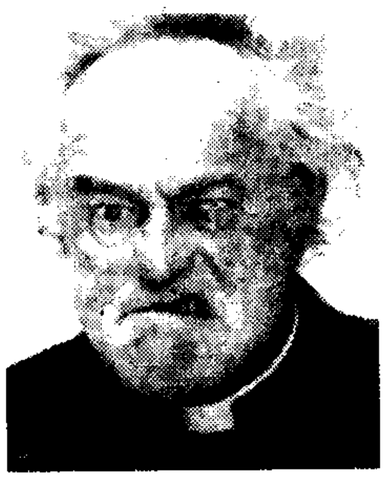
I could go on but there are, of course, only two questions that need answers. 1) What possible motivation could a board of governors have for suspending and attempting to sack an "accomplished and popular head teacher"? 2) Is it perhaps possible that Ms Younie is not in reality the victim, but in fact the author of her own downfall?

My continued subscription is hanging by a thread.

Yours sincerely,
D.J. LAUGHLIN,
(Former teacher at Belfairs)
Hullbridge, Essex.

Lookalike

Father Jack



Sir James

Sir,

Have you noticed the resemblance between the mad, raving Father Jack Hackett and the mad, raving Sir James Goldsmith?

I wonder if by any chance they are related?

Yours,
ANDREW SCULL,
Ilkley, W. Yorks.

Collector's item

Sir,

I refer to a December edition of your publication in which you stated that Baroness Blackstone (Birkbeck College) had given only £2 to a collection for a retiring colleague of mine. This is totally incorrect and as I am the person doing the collecting, I am in a position to know the true facts. These are as follows:

1 Contrary to college policy the master (Baroness Blackstone) agreed that I could do the collection.

2 She was in fact most generous, as was Dr Christine Mabey (college secretary) and all the other administrative personnel.

3 I raised over £1,000 which surpassed all expectations and, therefore, created a record which I doubt (because of your article) will ever be broken.

I am, therefore, horrified that some "gutless wonders" have latched on to something, of which they know nothing, to make what I can only assume is an attempt to discredit the very lady who in fact saved Birkbeck College from closure some years ago. My goodness what short memories they have!

Yours faithfully,
SHEILA BARR (MRS),
Birkbeck College, London W1.

"I bet my stepfather's got more children from a previous marriage than yours"

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"We need the players, because without the players we wouldn't have a team."
HOWARD WILKINSON, FA Technical Director, Radio 4
(Don Salter)

"What an opening for Shutt..."
JOHN HELM, Yorkshire TV
(David Elvidge)

"Once you've had a bull terrier, you'd never want any other dog. I've got two bull terriers, a rottweiler and a bulldog."
JULIAN DICKS, Radio 5 Live
(Julian Thake)

"Kevin Keegan has now tasted the other side of the fence..."
DAVE MERRINGTON, Radio 5 Live
(Laurence Todd)

Phil Collins: *Bags have been left, bags have been lost, the Tour Manager didn't get his wake-up call...*
Interviewer: *I understand someone didn't wake up this morning.*
Phil Collins: *Yeah... the Tour Manager.*
Interviewer: *What happened?*
Phil Collins: *He didn't get his wake-up call.*
BBC1
(Colin Edmonds)

Letter from **Angola**

from Our Own Correspondent

ANGOLA is one of the unfortunate countries to fall under the auspices of the United Nations department of humanitarian affairs (UN-DHA), the organisation charged with control of global de-mining operations.

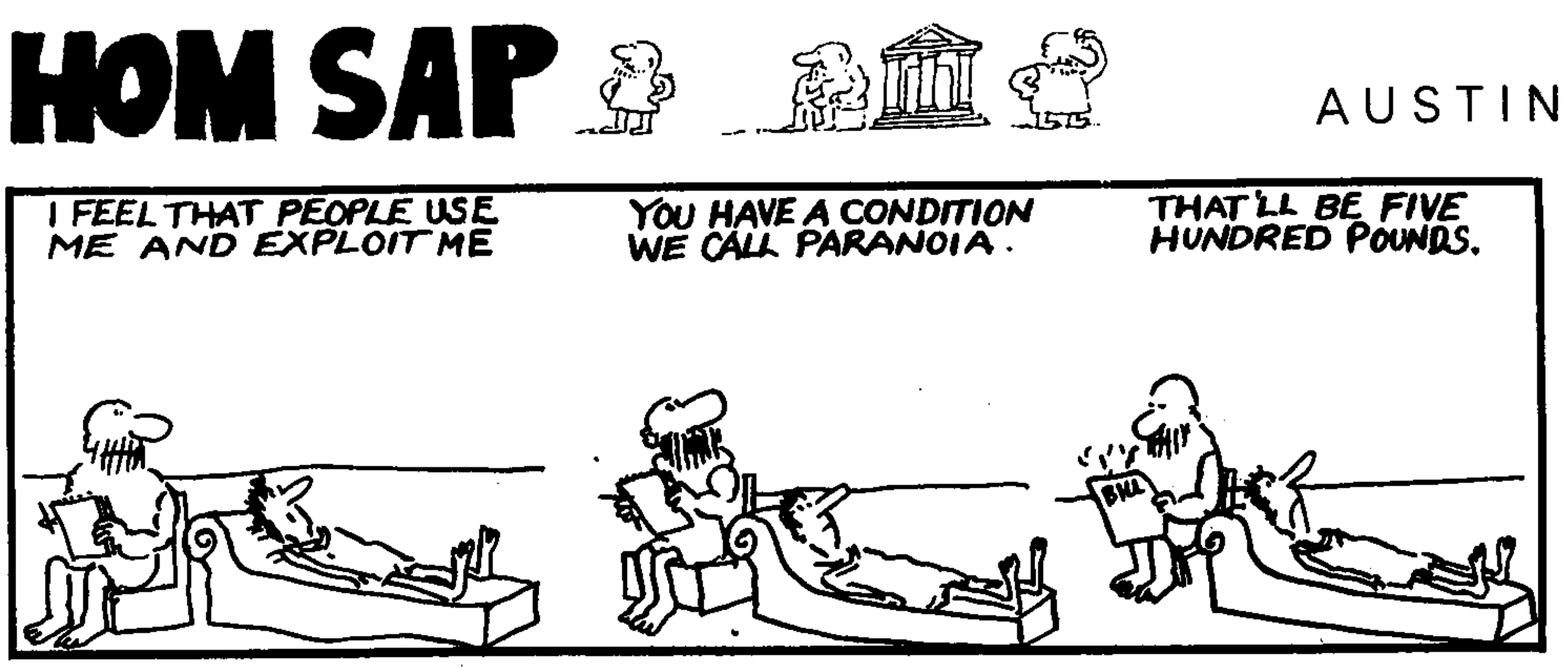
While there are more than 12 million mines in Angola, a recent report, commissioned by the World Bank, found that the two and a half year UN mine clearance operation here had achieved "virtually nothing". There was also found to be "insufficient recognition and understanding of the impact of landmines on reconstruction and development in Angola".

The report found that the UN-sponsored body known as the Central Mines Action Office (CMAO), staffed almost entirely by well paid UN expats, remained completely aloof from the indigenous organisation, the Angolan Institute for the Removal of Explosive Obstacles (INAROE).

Communication between the two was not helped by the failure of UN staff to speak any Portuguese. The investigating team gained an "unavoidable impression of a complete breakdown of personal and professional relationships between these two organisations". The also states that "the current management, training and planning structure as established is unsustainable and potentially the greatest obstacle to long-term effective mine action in Angola".

As a result of this damning report, Eddy Banks, who ran CMAO for the UN, was removed from the Angolan operation. Significantly, though the World Bank investigating team found many faults in the operation run by Mr Banks, his efforts were well regarded by the UN-DHA officers at the UN de-mining headquarters in New York.

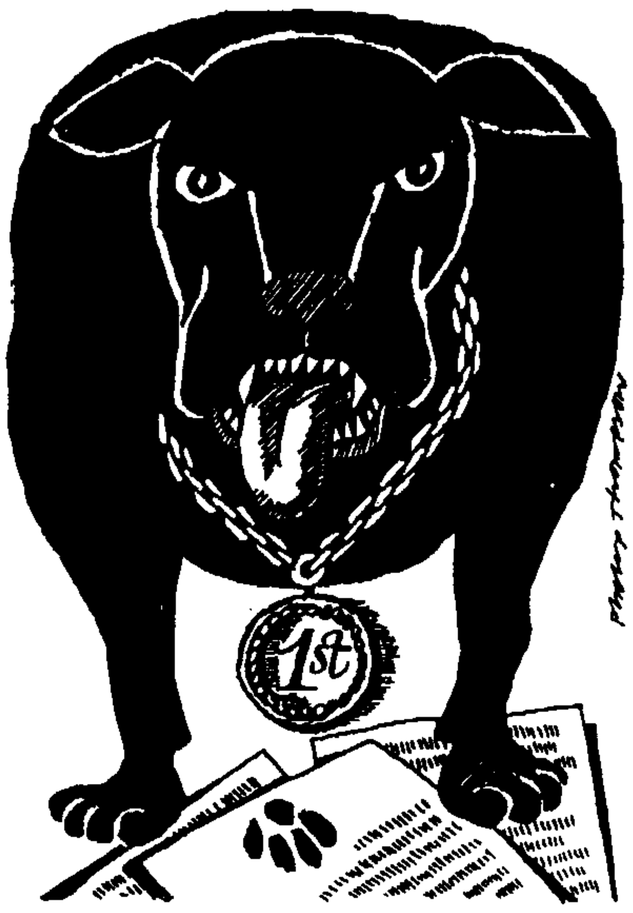
At the same time the World Bank report was completed, a number of "experts" had just completed the first UN conference in Copenhagen on "mine clearance technology". Little was resolved at the meeting, leaving those who attended eagerly awaiting the next free junket (ie conference) to set standards for mine clearance worldwide. The conference took place in December in Afghanistan, with some 35 people being flown in business class. All were presented with a dossier titled "International Survey Standards for Humanitarian Mine Clearance Operations". The report mentioned standards for surveys, logistic support and training — all items found lacking from the UN's operation in Angola. Surprising, then, to find that the author of the report and overall UN supremo for this process of standardising mining standards worldwide was none other than... Eddy Banks, the man who did so much in Angola.


HOM SAP
AUSTIN
I FEEL THAT PEOPLE USE ME AND EXPLOIT ME
YOU HAVE A CONDITION WE CALL PARANOIA.
THAT'LL BE FIVE HUNDRED POUNDS.
BILL

FUNNY OLD WORLD

O "Neuticles are just like regular testicles — except that they don't work, of course," Greg Miller told listeners to a San Francisco radio station. "Rocky is the first patient in California to be fitted with them and, thanks to my invention, no bitch need ever know he's got anything missing."

Miller, head of the Canine Testicular Implant program (run by the CTI Corporation of Buckner, Missouri), was speaking after Rocky, a hundred-pound Rottweiler, had undergone neutering surgery in Fresno. "Neuticles are coated



with polypropylene, the same material we use for human implants and surgical equipment, and they don't just make the dog's owner feel better. Dogs often get depressed after neutering, just like humans, but this way Rocky will never suspect anything's been removed. We're now marketing them under the slogan 'Neuticles, Looking and Feeling the Same'. When you see your veterinarian, ask for them by name."

Rocky won the prosthetic equipment through a contest run by the radio station, after submitting three ghost-written paragraphs entitled *Why I want to be fitted with Neuticles. (Newark (NJ) Star-Ledger, 29/12/96. Spotter — Anita Punshon Daniel)*

—O—

O "This demand is outrageous," a spokesman for the Shenzhen Labour Bureau told a reporter from the *Tin Tin Daily News*. "All workers are entitled to their annual holiday and, in any case, the management have not even told them how to tell the sex of a mosquito."

A formal complaint was lodged with the Wei Gong furniture company in Shenzhen after the management barred its workers from taking holidays unless they first handed over a hundred dead flies — fifty male and fifty female. "The management says the scheme will discourage workers from all taking their leave at the same time. In the past, it seems, they've all gone on holiday during the Lunar New Year in February, and that cripples production. But the workers say the real reason is that the factory is swarming with flies, and management won't pay for proper pest control.

"But I tell the Wei Gong managers this: your insect quota scheme will not work. Why not? Because the workers have already started breeding their own flies in jam jars, that's why not." *(Straits Times [Singapore], 20/12/96. Spotter — Mrs B. Hickey)*

—O—

O *"This whole thing has rocked my faith in God," Eduardo Sanchez, 35, told a press conference in Barcelona. "Some people might say I'm lucky, but I think it shows a sick and twisted sense of humour on the part of the Almighty."*

Sanchez, a Spanish businessman and Roman Catholic, recalled the bizarre sequence of events that had befallen him in recent months. "I was in Stockholm on business, and I was worried about my health, so I stopped at a nearby church to pray. The church was empty except for a coffin containing the body of a man, and there was a condolence book beside him, with a note saying that anyone who prayed for his soul should enter their name and address. It was blank, so I prayed for him as well as for myself, and then I signed the book.

"Then, yesterday, I got a call from a Swedish legal firm telling me I was now a millionaire. It turned out that Jens Svenson, the man in the coffin, was a 73 year old estate dealer with no close relatives. He'd specified in his will that 'whoever prays for my soul will inherit my estate' and, apparently, I was the only one who did.

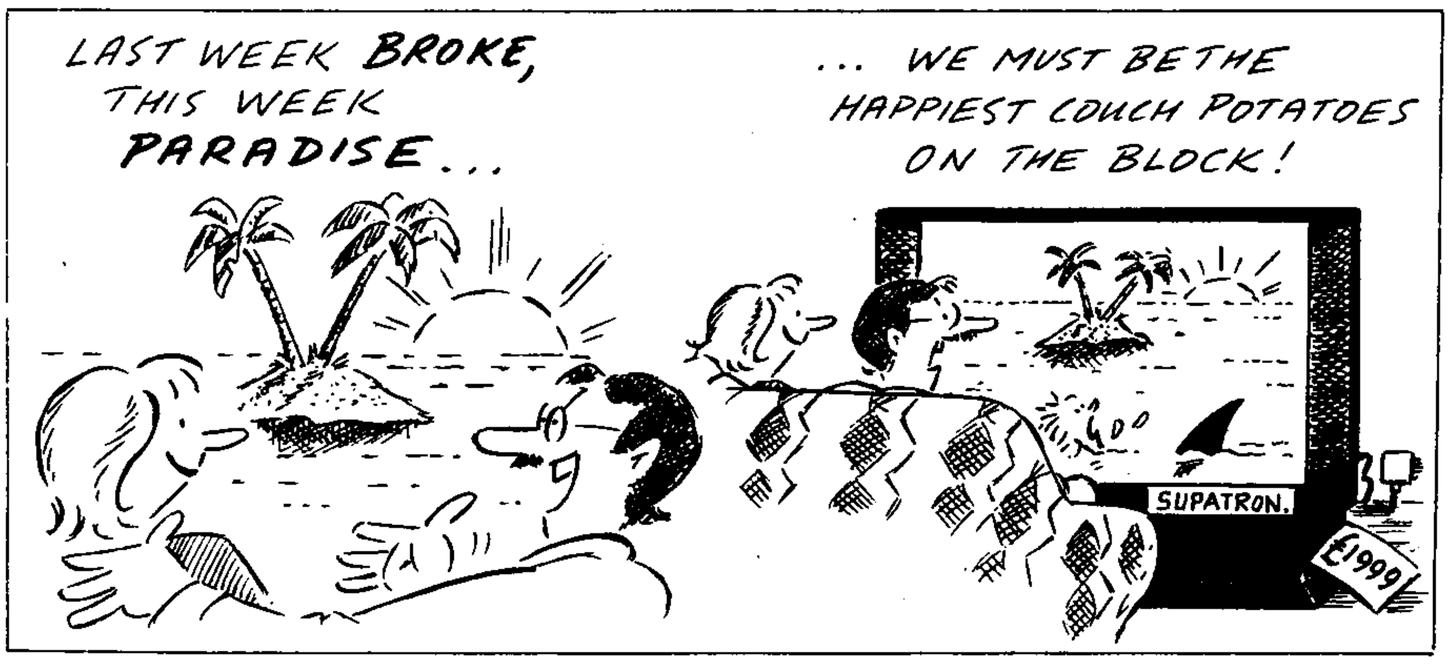
"So why am I not happy? Because I'd just found a lump in my testicles, and I was praying to God to please let it be benign. And instead, the hospital told me last week that it's an inoperable cancerous growth, and I am now a terminal case." (Bild [Hamburg], 2/10/96. Spotter — Brendan J. O'Byrne)

COMPILED BY

Victor Lewis-Smith

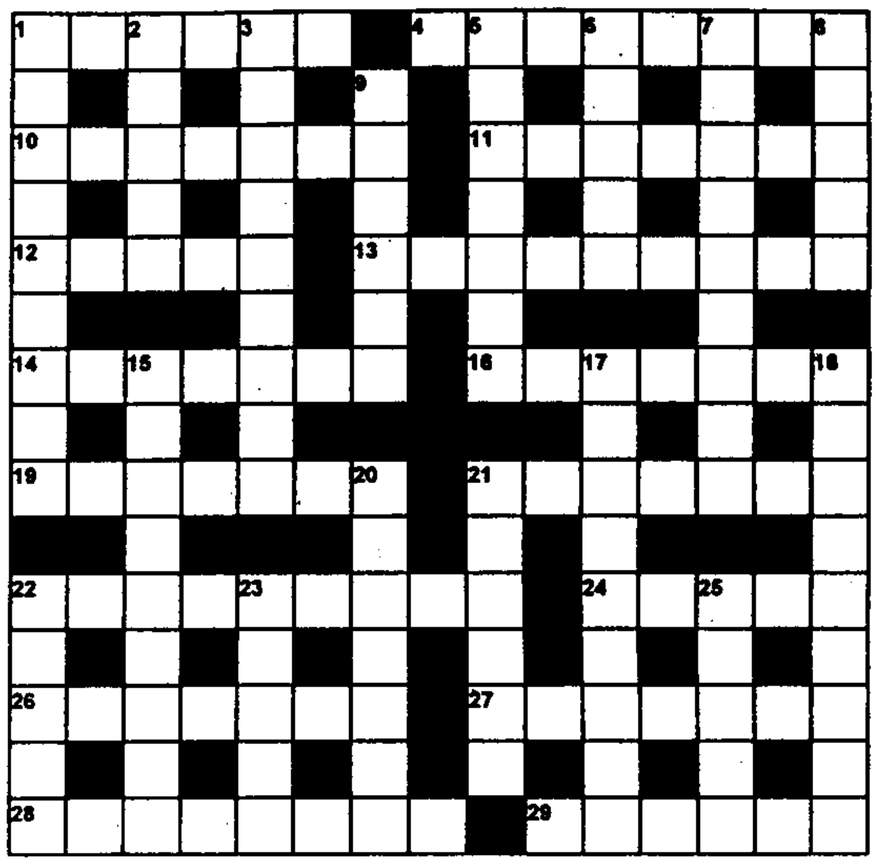
The Lottery Winners

TURNER



EYE CROSSWORD 71

by Cyclops — *£100 prize*



ACROSS

1 Popsy, cheerleader, does possess a mind! (6)
4 Make good operational cuts, as bent cops do? (6,2)
10 Old men moving earth daily! (2,5)
11 Gains not coming about for our embattled leader! (7)
12 Some metropolitan gymnastic tart (5)
13 Member's cover-up, 'Tarzan' fashion? (9)
14 A bit of a plant, this press piece (7)
16 Conservative action that dredges the depths (7)
19 Going into a slump, stretched to house flipping sick (7)
21 Yanks out to rubbish Proust circle (7)
22 Finally, Conservative MP paired off: 'It's a fantastic plan!' (4,5)
24 Not the day for Paul, as he is now, to go topless (5)
26 Gas associated with one close to Hezza's heart, one latter-day right-wing fanatic (3-4)
27/28 The issue of Di getting specifically fruity is one remembered by provincial marchers (7,2,6)
28 (see 27)
29 Position on Right for potential hooker (6)

DOWN

1/7 The BSE crisis was advantageous to one on Left, a half Tory, scoffing stew (9,3,6)
2 The old blokes' republic (5)
3 Our topping sovereign? (5,4)
5 Non-country folk have to be stuffed into trusses (7)
6 Philip reportedly into perversion gets caught (5)
7 (see 1)
8 Blow organ of well set up Egyptian (5)
9 Feeling of being shagged out after having landed fast car and let loose inside? (3,3)
15 Many a distant celeb surprised to find themselves taken with it? (9)
17 Rock and roll no improver of standards in public life? (4,5)
18 Tories at helm finally ballsed up this country (4,5)
20 Promiscuous type in with Goldsmith originally — one next to Hitler (7)
21 University 'new women' — wayward, lacking bearing — like the long grass (6)
22 Liberal gets leg over stunner (5)
23 Divorced party's lawyer squeezing much-sued editor (5)
25 Question that makes Brenda's old man queasy (5)

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 31.01.97. Entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 70

Winner: J.G. DIFFIN

ACROSS: 7 Baywatch 9/23 Clause Four 10 Hearse 11 Lame duck 12 Street of Shame 15 Madrid 16 Fashion 19 Paternity suit 22 Shuffle 24 Creole 25 Bureau 26 Baroness.
DOWN: 1 Vasectomy 2 Street-wise 3 The Left 4 Scum 5/17 Saddam Hussein 6 RSPCA 8 Warhead 13 Health care 14 Socialist 17 (see 5) 18 Entebbe 20 Amused 21 Pseud 23 (see 9).

WAR CRIMINAL TOO SENILE TO ANSWER CHARGES

by Our Legal Staff **Joshua Rozenbeard**

AN elderly man living alone in Salisbury has been discharged after accusations of war crimes in the European Theatre between 1970 and 1974.

Edward Grosserawitz, 89, looked bewildered as leading prosecutor Sir James "Achtung" Goldschmidt denounced him as "a traitor", "a liar" and the man responsible for the death of millions of British fish at the hands of the Spanish during the early years of the EC.

Grocer Misconduct

His voice rising to a mad crescendo, Sir Jimmy Goldfish accused the frail octogenarian of "pretending not to remember the incident.

"You haf betrayed your country and handed it over to ze enemy. Now you must pay the price — which is death by a million pamphlets."

It was difficult to imagine that the doddery white-haired old man described by neighbours as "a model citizen who sat at home playing his organ" had once commanded an elite squad of Toriz and had earned the nickname "Obergrosserführer" by his ruthless negotiations over Britain's signing of the Treaty of Rome.

Loonybore Heath

But after only a few minutes the jury walked out in disgust.

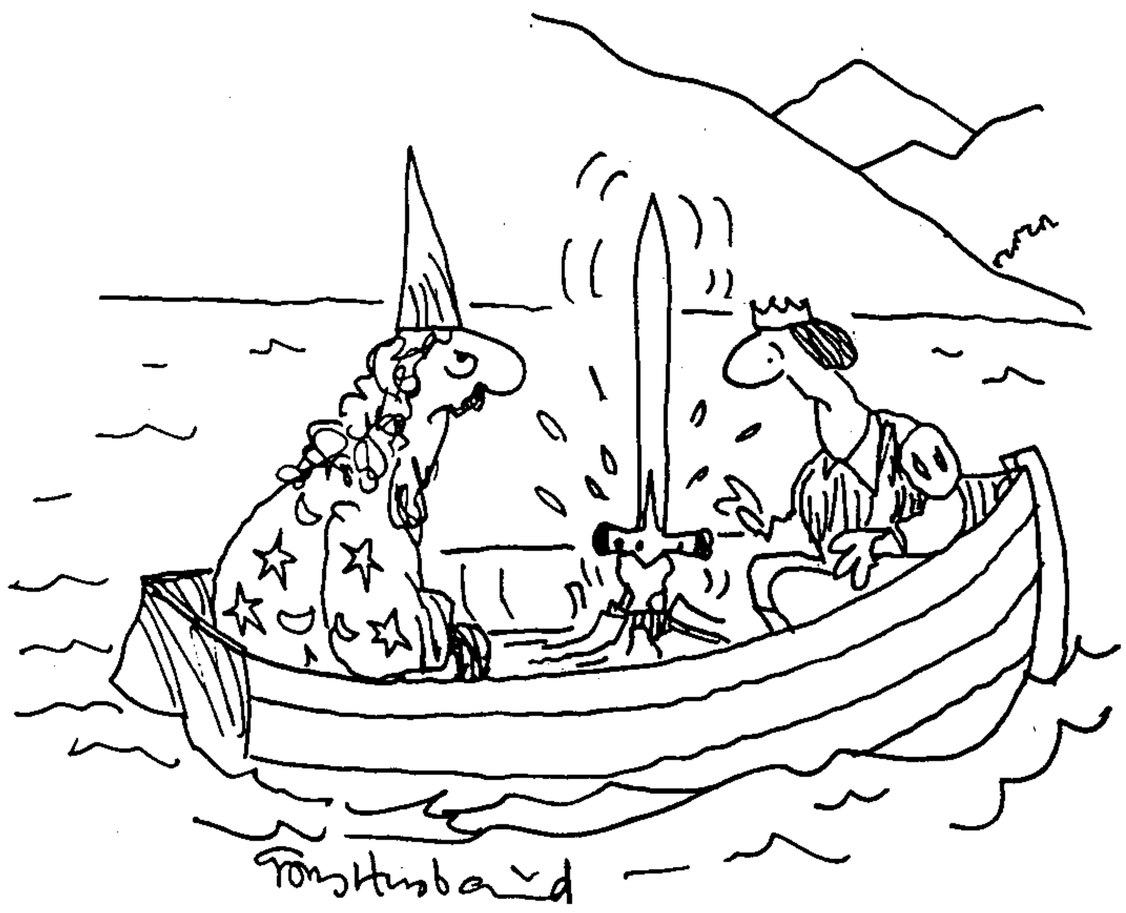
"He is a pathetic man," said the foreman, "but enough of Sir James Goldsmith. Anyway, it all happened a long time ago and I don't want to miss Emmerdale again."

It is estimated that the campaign to bring Grosserawitz to justice has cost Sir James £500 million.

Mother Golden Goose

There was an old woman who lived in a bank.
She had so much money she did not know who
to thank.
At the age of 35 she had five young kiddies.
And for some unknown reason, she earned one
million quiddies.

(Traditional English Rhyme)



Extraordinary Talent Lost To Public Service Broadcasting

SIR CHRISTOPHER Evans was the most outstanding broadcaster of his generation, **writes Phil Space**, and his departure from Radio One will leave an empty void that cannot be filled by lesser mortals.

His career, spanning as it does several weeks, stretches from his early days on Greater Neasden Radio where he coined his immortal catchphrase ("I want more money") to the lofty heights of BBC Radio One's Breakfart Show where he coined another immortal catchphrase ("I want more money and more holidays").

Sir Chris single-handedly pioneered a wholly new genre in the field of popular broadcasting and his innovative style made him easily recognisable to listeners. Who but Sir Crass could have come up with radio formats such as

- Honk if you're on the bog
- Honk if you've got a big one
- Honk if you want a bonk
- Honk if you want a honk

and

- I'm not coming in to work today?

He now takes his place in the pantheon of radio immortals alongside such legendary figures as Simon Dead, Dave Lee Trousers and various others you have forgotten.

Distressed callers meanwhile jammed the lines at Radio One only to be greeted by a recorded message on Sir Croesus's personal ansaphone which said:

"I am not prepared to answer this call until you give me a million pounds and 12 weeks holiday".

Such an approach has already revolutionised the whole ansaphone outgoing message industry and it

seems inevitable now that Sir Christopher will be given a special plaque in Westminster Abbey alongside Tony Blackburn and Dave "Diddy" Hamilton *(Who they? Ed.)* and his name will live for ever

(continued 94FM)

MEDICAL BRIEFING

Dr Thomas Stuttaford

Facing Life Without Work

Not working can often prove to be as dangerous as working for today's highly stressed top earners. The experience of both Nichola Horlick and Christopher Evans teach us nothing at all but the editor has asked me to fill up some space with one of my little pieces, so here it is.

DIANA WARNS OF 'MINE DANGER'

by Our Defence Staff
W.F. Dead

THE Princess of Wales last night defended her controversial trip to Angola by warning of the hidden dangers of anti-personnel mines.

"These things can all too easily blow up in your face," she cautioned, close to tears of laughter at the pathetic spectacle of a civilian casualty called Lord Howe. She said: "This young man had it all before him — a bright future in the Ministry of Defence, and maybe a seat in the Cabinet — but then he made one false move, tripped up on mines and put his foot in it. Bang!"

See Angola and Di

The Princess took out an onion and then continued "Lord Howe was once an able man but now his career is over.

"He underestimated how explosive these anti-personnel mines can be and now he doesn't have a leg to stand on.

"No one will help him, no one will want to know him. Ha, ha, ha, ha."

Lord Howe is 26.

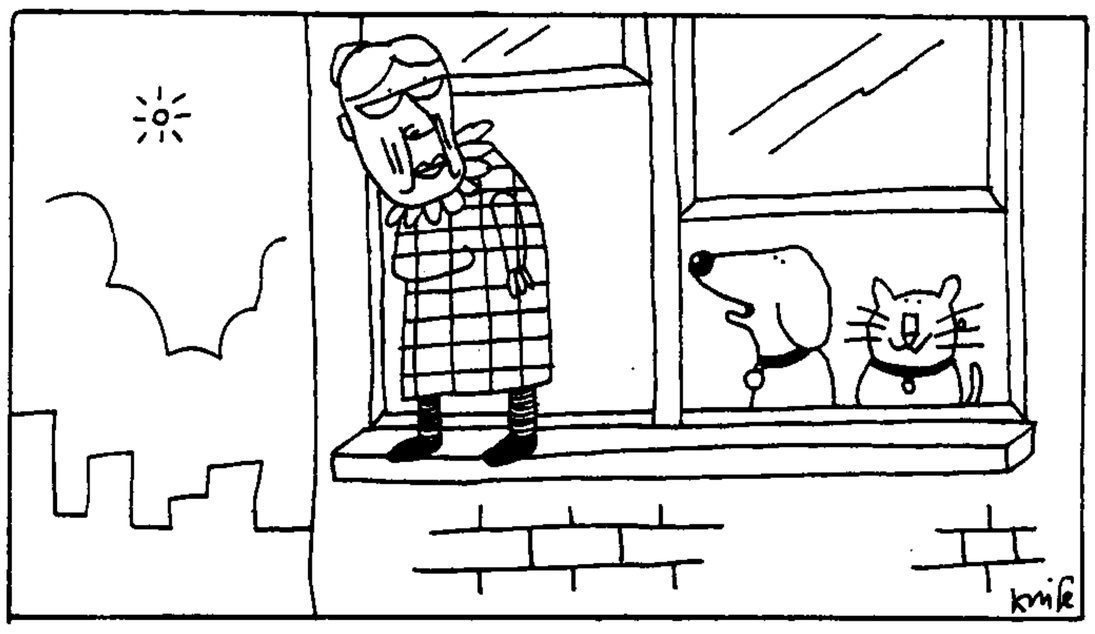
LATE NEWS

Howe denial

JUNIOR Defence Minister Lord Howe denied last night that he had called Princess Diana "a loose cannon".

"If she were a huge dodgy gun, then this government would have exported her to Iraq years ago," he said.

(Reuters)



"Before you jump, could you tell us where the tin-opener is?"

That Lord Howe
Daily Telegraph
lunch menu in full

Tripe

— ✻ —

Steamed-Up Flounder

— ✻ —

Cooked Goose

— ✻ —

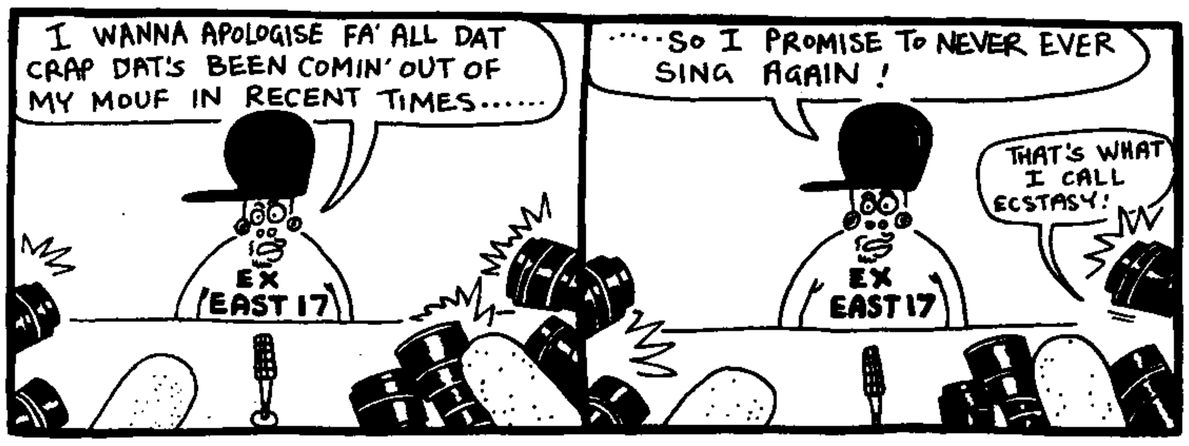
Tory Fool

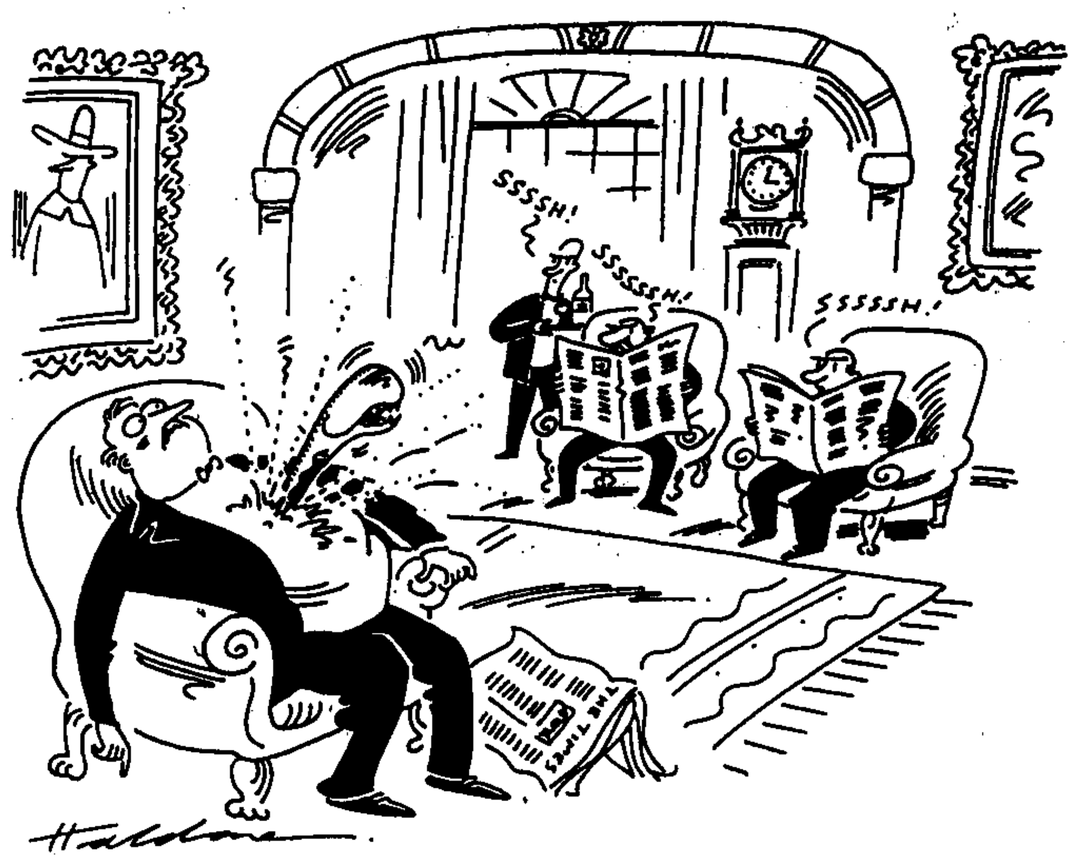
— ✻ —

To drink:
A Selection of Whines

SUPERMODELS

KERBER

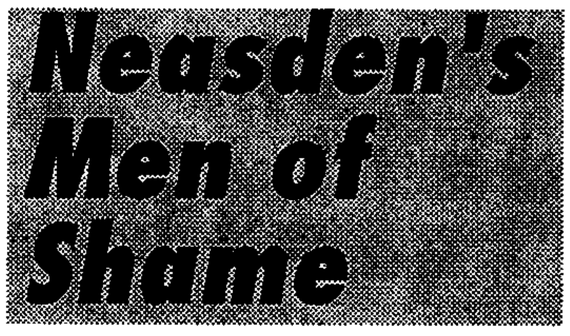

I WANNA APOLOGISE FA' ALL DAT CRAP DAT'S BEEN COMIN' OUT OF MY MOUF IN RECENT TIMES.....
EX EAST 17
.....SO I PROMISE TO NEVER EVER SING AGAIN!
THAT'S WHAT I CALL ECSTASY!
EX EAST 17



PICTUREPROBE

Who are they — the players at the centre of Football's Trial of the Century?

by Our Man In The Courtroom With The Can Of Zimbabwe Export-Strength Grobelaager And The Packet Of Segers's Bung-Shaped Crisps
E.I. Erewegotogaol



1 Wally Foot, 63, legendary goalkeeper who joined Neasden United straight from Borstal in 1948 and, despite having only one leg, played a record-breaking 7812 continuous games for the club. Much loved by the fans (Sid and Doris Bonkers), who gave him the nickname "Useless" when in 1965 he let through 87 goals in the first ten minutes of a pre-season North London Relegation League friendly against Woolworth's Staff Reserves.

Foot is accused of accepting a four-figure sum (£12.38) from Malaysian businessman Mr Yin Kok to save a goal in a 1983 league game against Dollis Hill.

Foot made a successful save, his first ever, although he claims this was an accident.

2 Archibald "Sailor" Buthelezi, 46, Neasden's exciting number 3 shirt. Born in exotic Ilford, Buthelezi was known for his colourful lifestyle and his off-the-park devotion to various young players.

On a video shown in the courtroom, Buthelezi is seen handing over a brown envelope to Mr Foot, with the words: "Here you are, Wally, here's a Neil Hamilton for you."

3 Yusd Fivers, 34, Neasden's legendary Dutch-born reserve goalkeeper, who owns a small cardboard-box manufacturing business in Amsterdam's notorious red light district.

For full story see pages 8-94.

The Secret DIARY OF JOHN MAJOR aged 47¾

Monday

Today I launched my election campaign by holding Britain's first ever Presidential-style press conference. Hundreds of journalists were summoned to our Party headquarters by Mr Dr Mawhinney and I walked in to the tune of Hail to the Chief! Mr Dr Mawhinney said: "Ladies and gentlemen, I give you the next President of the United Kingdom!". Everyone agreed I was just like President Clinton, except for one silly journalist who tried to spoil it by saying "Show us your saxophone, John," and another one who cried "When's Mrs Kierans bringing the harassment case?" Apart from this my conference was a huge success and proved that Mr Blair is no match for me when it comes to pretending to be the President of the United States. Oh yes. Or should it be: "Oh yes sirree"? Later my wife Norman celebrated my success by making me a special American-style dinner of waffles. "How very appropriate," I said. "Yes," she agreed, giving me one of her funny looks. "No one waffles like you do."

Tuesday

Today Mr Dr Mawhinney had another of his brilliant election-winning ideas. "Today you're going to win the Asian vote, John," he said. "We're going to fly you out to India to meet Mrs Bhutto." "But surely," I said, "she had to stop being prime minister because her government was so sleazy?" "You can learn a lot from her, John," he said in his funny Irish voice, handing me my ticket.

Wednesday

India was very big, especially the bit of it called Pakistan. We went to a famous place called the Khyber Pass. "This is a very historic site for you British," said our guide. "I know," I said. "It is the place where they made my favourite film, Carry On Up The Khyber, which in my judgement was the funniest film ever made." I then told our guide all about it, especially the scene where Kenneth Williams disguises himself as the Mad Mahdi by putting on a silly hat and then pulls down Sid James's trousers. To show what I meant, I borrowed a hat from one of the tribesmen and put it on. Suddenly all the photographers woke up and began snapping away furiously. "You are brilliant, prime minister," they laughed. "You never disappoint us. Wait till they get an eyeful of this one back home."

Norman said: "You've done it now, John." "I know I have," I told her. "When all the Mr Patels at home see me looking like them, I will have the entire Asian vote in the bag."

Thursday

Mr Dr Mawhinney rang me from England in tears and said: "There is a picture of you in a silly hat on the front page of every newspaper in the land." "That is good," I said. "You can make one of your famous posters out of it, with the slogan 'New Khyber, New Hat'." "It's not a joking matter, you idiot, I mean prime minister," he said. "You should see the headlines — 'What A Khyber Ass' (the Mirror), 'Don't Carry On John' (the Express) and 'Major's Mad Hat Bloomer Adds Up To Indian Bummer' (the Financial Times)." I refused to be in any respect down-hearted by Mr Dr Mawhinney's failure to understand the success of my brilliant ethnic-hat stunt. As I told Norman later: "You know what they say, all publicity is bad publicity." "How very true," she said, as she spiced up her Chicken Vindaloo with some pieces of frozen cheese which she had brought specially from home.

Friday

When I got home, I found everyone saying that Mr Howard had thrown his hat into the ring. "That is nothing," I told the man from the Daily Telegraph. "I threw mine out of the aeroplane, because Mr Heseltine told me not to bring it home."

There was only one message on the ansaphone, which is not all that many when you have been away for three days and are the prime minister. It was from my brother Terry who was complaining at all the publicity I was getting. "It is my job to go round the world posing for daft pictures," he said, "and anyway your favourite film was not Carry On Up The Khyber, it was Genevieve which you went to see 32 times with Mrs Kierans. It's all in my book, as you know perfectly well."

Saturday

My new friend Mr Sir George Young rang me this morning with another brilliant suggestion for winning the election. "Why don't we privatise the Underground?" he said. "Now that selling off the railways has been such a resounding success and made us so popular." I told Norman about Mr Sir George Young's votewinning plan, while we were watching one of the new annual programmes about endangered species. "Very good, John," she said. "You really are going down the tube now."

Sunday

Today is a very sad day for our party. We have lost our majority owing to the death of an MP I have never heard of. This is very inconsiderate indeed and typical of the disloyalty of so many of the party who are meant to support me rather than die at inopportune moments. Oh yes. "People dying will not help our cause," I said to the Cabinet. "I don't know about that," said Mr Clarke with a funny look and everybody started laughing (including Mr Heseltine who came out of his room to laugh with the others).

"It is no laughing matter when an obscure Conservative MP passes away."

"It depends who it is," said Mr Heseltine and then went back to making a full-scale model of his Millennium Hezzadrome.

Monday

No wonder Labour are ahead in the polls. Not that they are. They have stolen all my ideas. Mr Brown has announced that he will cut income tax and cut spending!

Mr Clarke told me not to worry.

"If they really are our ideas, John," he said, "no one will vote for them."

89 PER CENT OF PUBLIC VOTE FOR ABOLITION OF CARLTON

by Our Media Staff **Michael Greenbacks**

IN THE biggest phone-in poll ever held in the history of television, 20 million viewers voted last night for the immediate removal of Carlton Television from any further part in Britain's national life.

"The television firm should be replaced by a blank screen," said an astonishing 94 per cent of those polled, although 6 per cent declared themselves in favour of 24-hour repeats of Dad's Army and Dr who.

A supplementary question, "Do you think Michael Green a fit and proper person to be the supreme head of a TV company?" was answered in the negative by a staggering 105 per cent.

Claire Long To Rayner Over Us

The phone-in came after a four-hour-long debate which featured many distinguished commentators from all walks of life.

Among those who spoke up in favour of Carlton were Sir Melvyn Barg, who told viewers: "This is democracy in action — two million people screaming abuse at each other in a TV studio can't be wrong."

He was supported by Sir Jeremy Paxperson, who said: "It's very important for ITV to put on this sort of low-grade rubbish, so that I look terrific on BBC2."

James Whitaker's All-maniac

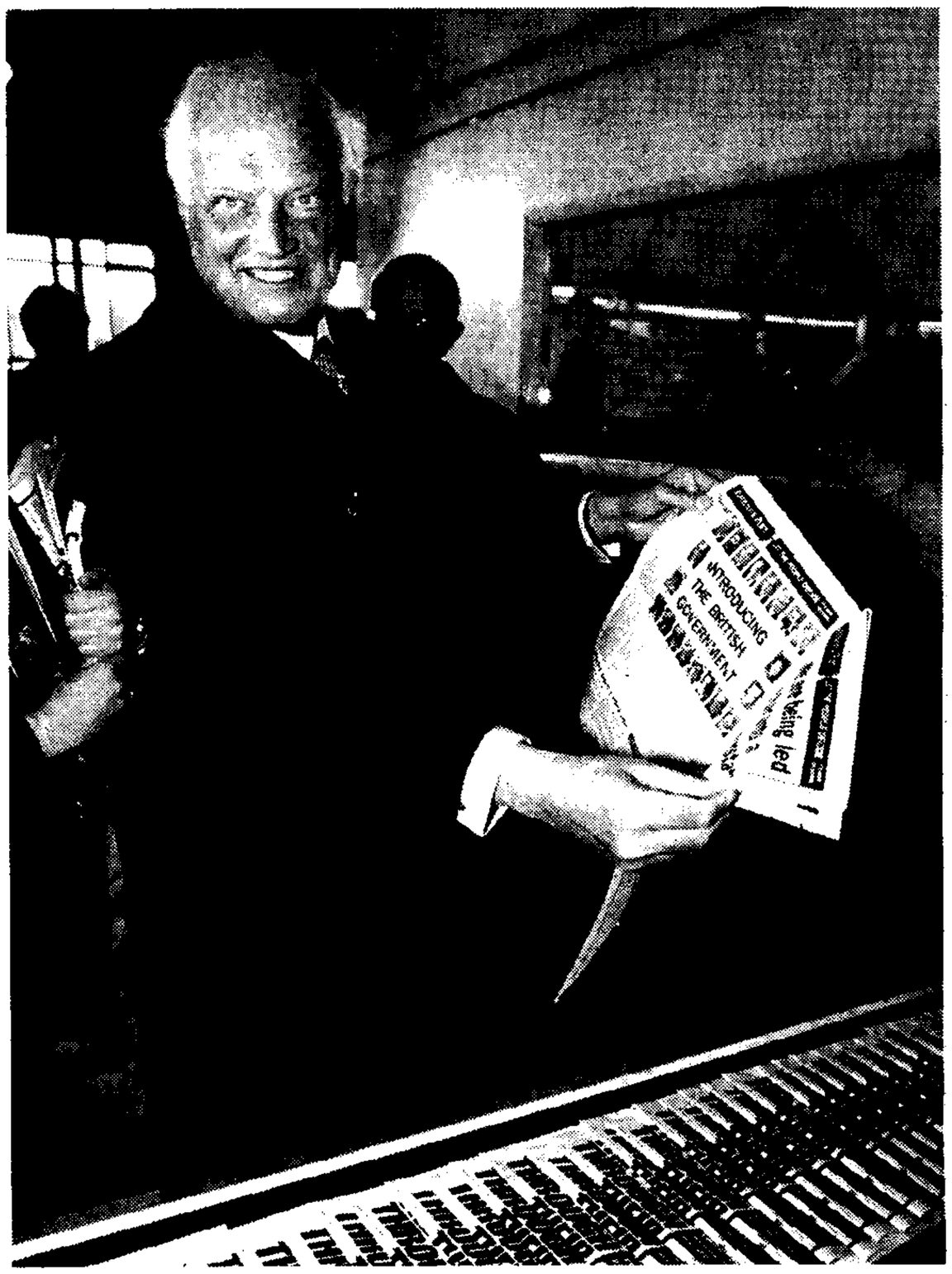
But other speakers were violently opposed to the idea that Carlton should survive into the 21st century.

Said Sir Robin Day, 108: "In the good old days I was the only person who was allowed to be rude on television. Now everyone is at it."

He was backed up by a senior government minister Sir Tom Sackmeoriquit, who shouted: "It is outrageous that a cheap, nasty and vulgar company like Carlton should have been given a franchise in the first place just because they were the highest bidder.

"Whichever government was responsible should be thoroughly ashamed of themselves and deserve to be booted out at the next election."

TV Highlights



BBC1 9.00 pm Citizen Kon

LEGENDARY masterpiece about the rise and fall of a megalomaniac media tycoon.

Kon is here shown launching his doomed newspaper "Marmite News" before retiring to a lonely life as a recluse in Mexico.

But, in opting for a caution they ought to have extracted a promise of public penitence. Now, all that a wider public knows of the incident is that a man who has boasted of spending £300 a day on cocaine has been let off without even a smack on the wrists.

Western Daily Press

THE CAROL SINGING BY THE GUIDE DOGS FOR THE BLIND at Brookfield Farm last weekend raised over £300. Many thanks to those who took part and those who supported this.

St.Mary Cheshunt newsletter

Celeb

LIGGER

ALL THESE SYMPTOMS YOU'RE COMPLAINING OF ARE JUST PART OF YOUR PARADISE SYNDROME HYPOCHONDRIA...
YOUR LIFESTYLE IS SO PERFECT, YOU HAVE EVERYTHING YOU WANT, SO YOU IMAGINE THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG TO COMPENSATE.
I'LL CHECK YOUR REFLEXES ANYWAY JUST TO BE ON THE SAFE SIDE.
GENTLE TAP
OWWW! YOU COULD'VE SHATTERED MY KNEE CAP. GET A HELICOPTER AMBULANCE HERE NOW!
SEE?

GOVERNMENT ATTACKS 'SCOTTISH BEGGARS'

by Our Home Affairs Staff **Tam O'Ranter**

AN ASTONISHING outburst by a government minister, Mr McLoony, caused a storm today when he called for a policy of "Zero Tolerance" on unemployed Scottish beggars.

"These no-hopers," he said, "hang around outside the House of Commons and threaten people who do not give them their vote.

"They may attract sympathy with their sad faces and pathetic hard-luck stories," he continued, "but I can assure you that they are highly organised and potentially dangerous."

Big Tissue Of Lies

The minister then named a number of beggars, all of whom he claimed came from Scotland.

"Tony is one," he declared, "who smiles at everyone in a winning way but who should not be trusted.

"Wee Gordon is another typical scrounger, and so is his friend Auld Cookie, who has a beard and wild staring eyes.

"I am sickened by them all!" he shouted. "One of them even has a dog to attract sympathy. He's called MacBlunkett and you'd better steer clear of him."

The Minister warned the public not to listen to the Scotsmen's aggressive begging and told voters to vote Conservative or else they would be beaten up.

"We know where everyone in the country lives," he said. "So make the right decision."

Mr Maclean is 42.

PROFILE

Two Scottish beggars who went home

TWO typical Scotsmen who were initially attracted to the bright lights of London have taken the Minister's recent advice and returned to Bonny Scotland, writes the Eye's Insight Team, **Phil Space**.

Case History One – Andrew "Wee Andy" Jaspan

Like many of his countrymen, Andy was lured to the capital by the promise of easy money. A kind-hearted English benefactor Peter Preston, who ran a small business in London's seedy Farringdon Road, offered Andy a job editing the Observer. Little did the charitable old philanthropist know what havoc Jaspan was about to wreak. Within days the place was in ruins and Jaspan was out on the street. He now sells the Big Issue in Scotland.

Neill and Jaspan after losing their shirts

Case History Two – Andrew "Brillo" Neill

Like many of his countrymen, Andy was lured to the capital by the promise of easy money. An unpleasant Australian benefactor running a vast international business in London's seedy Wapping offered Brillo a job editing the Sunday Times.

Little did the devious old megalomaniac know what havoc Neill was about to wreak.

Within ten years the Sunday Times was a byword for all that was worst in British journalism. Brillo was thrown out on the street. He now sells the European back in Scotland.

THE PRAT IN THE HAT

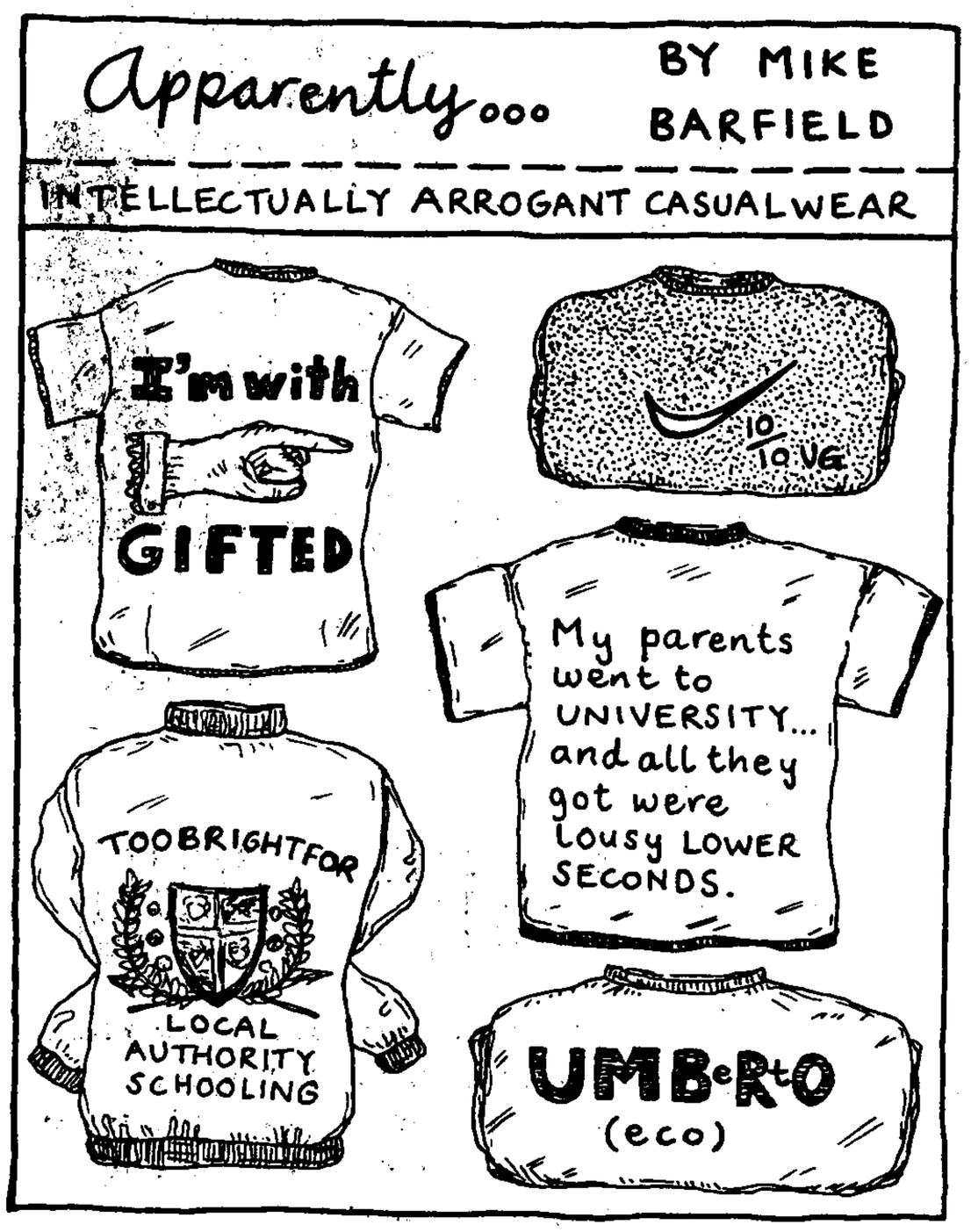
By Spin Dr. Seuss

There's nothing to do on a cold winter's day
So what could turn up to drive boredom away?
When suddenly plop! there dropped on the mat,
Some wonderful snaps of the Prat in the Hat!

"Look at me! Look at me!"
Says the Prat in the Hat
"I'm on the front page
Mr Blair can't do that!"

"I'm a respected world statesman.
I'm a serious figure."
Said the Prat in the Hat
As we all had a snigger.

"I don't think it's funny."
Said the Prat up the Khyber
As everyone chortled
And vowed to vote Lyber.
(Shurely 'Conservative'? Spin-Doctor Seussless)



He's back by popular request!

EU Commissioner **Neil Kinnock** talks to the Eye about the proposed merger of British Airways and American Airlines.

THE Tory government is totally, utterly and totally wrong in its utterly cynical disregard for the anti-monopoly rules embodied, captured, enshrined and indeed encapsulated in the Treaty of Rome which lays down clearly and with perfect clarity that British Airways is only permitted, entitled or allowed to operate three flights a day out of Heathrow Airport, now

designated by Brussels as Edward Heathport, to recognise as is totally his due Mr Heath's unshakeable, unswerving and unswervably unshaking commitment to the building of the new Europe and his equally totally and utterly equal hatred of Mrs Thatcher and all that she stood for. So, if I can just sum up, garçon, encore une douzaine bouteilles de that jolly good Chateau whatever it is that we had yesterday *(Thank you, Commissioner Kinnock, your time is up).*

Harry Enfield's **Class Bores** Drawn by **Michael Heath**

5. Downward Mobility

"Well, to be quite frank, we are ever so slightly concerned about the Madeleys who abide next door in 'Pleasant Ville' I mean do not misunderstand me, they are ever such a refined couple as is befitting of an Estate of the style & type of exclusive quality such as 'Beeches Meadows' is but since David Madeley was suffered by the tragedy of being made redundant two years ago I'm afraid it has come to our notice that they have sadly let their standards of behaviour drop to a level that is, quite frankly, not expected of the genteel nature of their fellow residents I mean I do not wish to be uncharitable but look, for instance, at their car. Whereas before David drove an executive BMW & Sheila a Mercedes similar in style of type to that of my own, they are now forced to *share* the use of an 'L' registration Vauxhall Astra of the style of type preferred by those who live on council estates and Sheila has been seen by Vivienne who abides at 'Pixie's Cote' opposite with carrier bags full of shopping from 'Iceland' I mean they now stand out a mile & make life uncomfortable for all us other residents of this estate not to mention what they are doing to house prices I mean they really are letting down the tone & I do not think it would be uncharitable to say that, really, it would be kinder for them to seek a much more humbler dwelling more suitable to their position on one of the less exclusive Estates where they would hopefully surely be happier mixing with their own type..."

If You Have Tears To Shed...

Bernard Levin

It was the incomparable Bard of Avon himself, if I am not mistaken, which those who know me are kind enough to say I never am, who with his customary gift for the *mot juste* hit the proverbial nail on the equally proverbial head when he wrote of the death of Levinius Pontificus in that much under-rated masterpiece *Bernardo, the Bore of Wapping*, that when the great man departed from the earth:

The heavens themselves did rend apart
And shower sad rain upon the grieving world,
Yea, e'en the very bees did moan in tuneful dirge
As with dull wings they toiled upon the bud;
And in the streets the children wailed their song,
That one was gone who once had been their king;
Remembering heart-spent in doleful rhymes
The greatest-ever column in the Times.

There will doubtless be those churlish souls, Mr Enoch Powell among their number, and their number grows apace with every year, that our schoolchildren must spend their days poring over the texts of soap operas and sociological tracts rather than on the proper study of mankind which is, as the poet said, man himself, there will, as I say, be those who stoutly maintain, or thinly maintain for all I know, or indeed care, that the author of this incomparable tribute to arguably the greatest writer who has ever bestridden the narrow columns of the Times like a colossus, was not Shakespeare, or Shagspaw as some pedants urge, or even Shakazulu for aught I know or for that matter care, or have I said this before?, not that I am going to allow this to worry me now, for it never has in the past, nor will it in the future *(There is no future. You're fired. Ed)*. You will never see my like again *(You're still fired. Ed)*. As I was saying before I was so rudely interrupted *(Come in Bernard Levin, you're time is up. Ed)* O tempora, O mores, or for those without the inestimable benefits of a classical education, oh dear the Times seems to have sacked me. *(Not to be continued)*

Chessmen Behaving Badly

Video Releases of the Week

Around The World In Five Minutes

Classic star-packed British adventure comedy, in which intrepid explorer Silliarse Branson sets off on a heroic publicity stunt by flying a hot-air balloon onto the front pages of every newspaper in the world. Hilarious climax as balloon takes off and immediately comes down again, nearly killing everyone on board.

Cast in full

Richard Branson	CHARLES BRONSON
Per Lindstrom	MAX VON SYDOW
Man on Camel	DAVID FROST
"Dirty Tricks Squad"	THE STAFF OF BRITISH AIRWAYS (prop. Sir C. Marshall)

Those Magnificent Men In Their Flying Balloons

Classic star-packed British adventure farce about international round-the-world balloon race. The fun starts when all the balloons crash to the ground minutes after take-off, nearly killing everyone on board.

Cast in full

Richard Branson	TERRY-THOMAS
Per Lindstrom	INGMAR BERGMAN
First Arab	M. AL-FAYED
Second Arab	HIS BROTHER
PR Man to First and Second Arabs	MICHAEL COLE

The Cruel Sea

Classic British adventure drama based on real-life story of the lone British yachtsman who has to be rescued by the Australian navy when his boat turns over,

Cast in full

Lone Yachtsman	STANLEY HOLLOWAY
Admiral Sir Crocodile Dundee	PAUL HOGAN
1st Shark	SIR JAMES GOLDFISH

(That's enough videos. Ed.)

POETRY CORNER

In Memoriam: Lines On The Sacking Of Sir Peregrine Worsthorne, Senior Columnist And Former Editor Of The Sunday Telegraph

So. Farewell
Then. Sir Peregrine
Worsthorne.

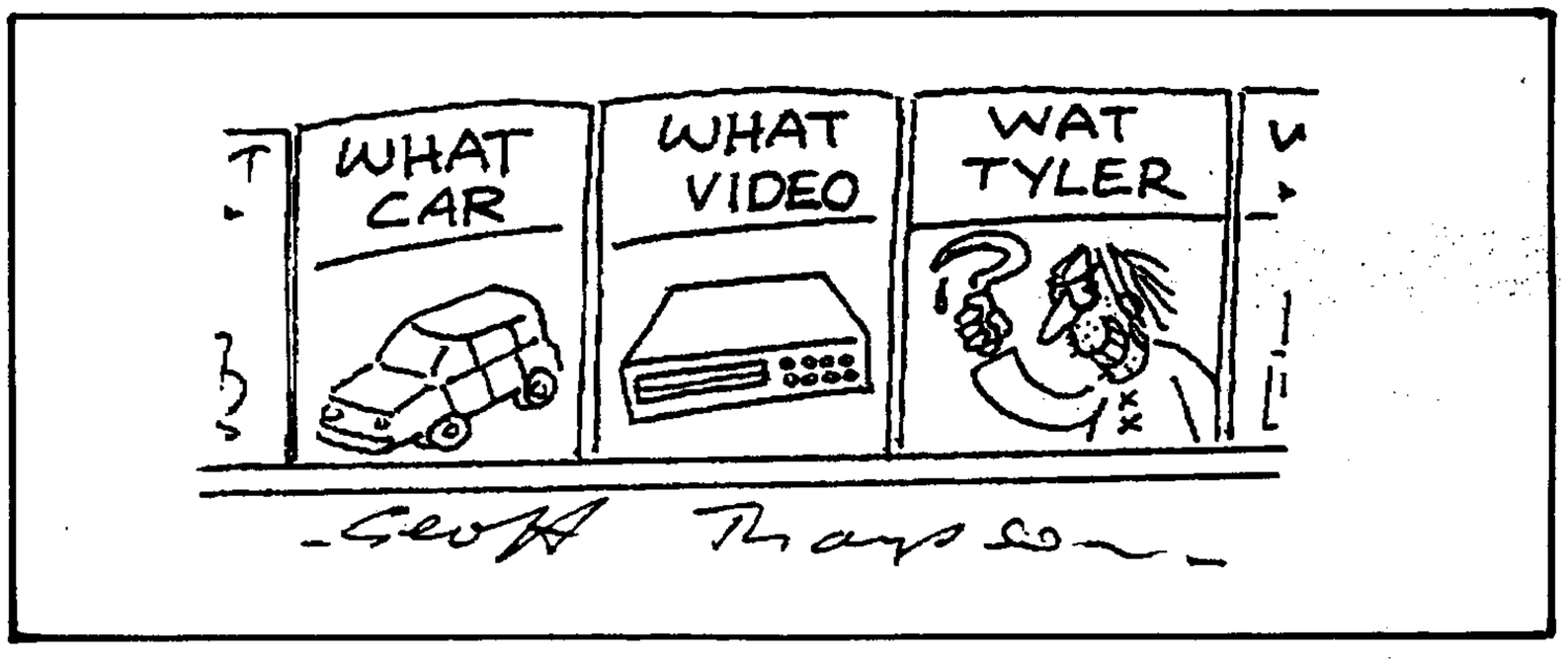
You have been
Sacked after 30
Years of loyal
Service to the
Sunday Telegraph.

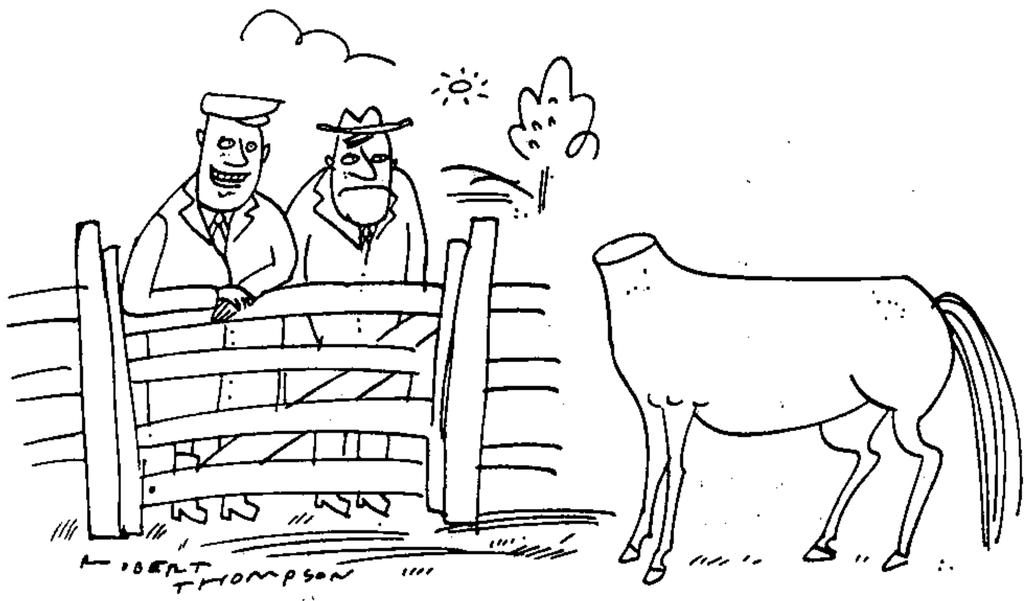
"The free
Market". That
Was your
Catchphrase.

Now you know
What it
Means.

E.J. Thribb (17½)

Winner of the T.S. Eliot Prize for his slim volume *A Garland of Withered Leaves*





"That's an Arab if ever I saw one"

SHELL HAILS NEW SCHEME FOR BRENT SPAR

by Our Environmental Staff **Graham Greenpeace**

AN EXCITING new plan has been put forward by a Knightsbridge businessman for utilising the Brent Spar oil platform, currently languishing in a Norwegian fjord.

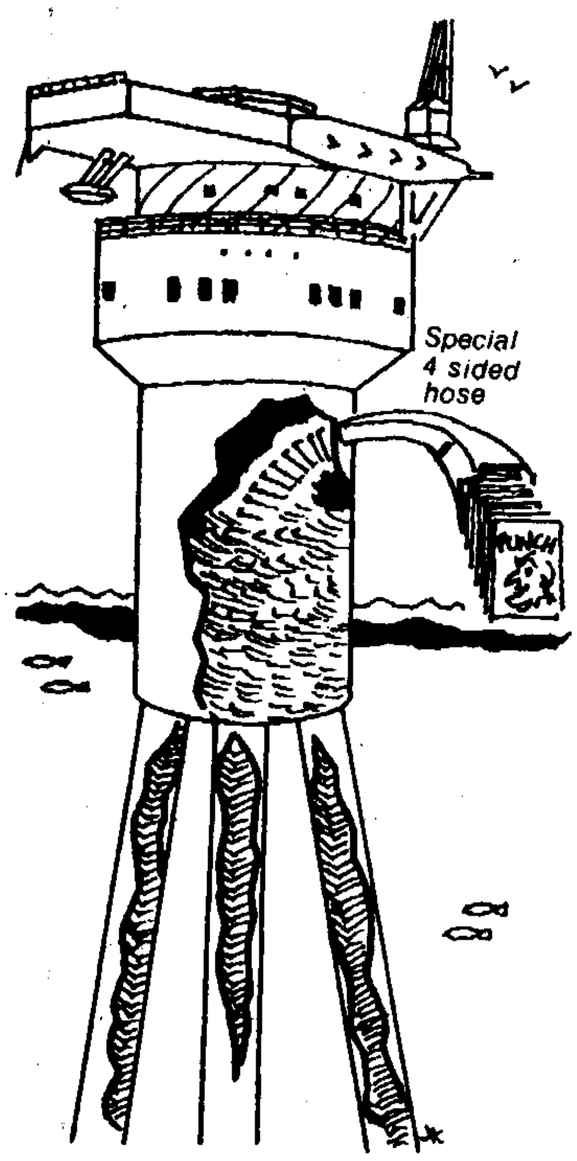
Dismissing alternative plans for its use as a fish farm, theme park or coastal protection device, Mr Fayed outlined his own revolutionary idea.

Totally Brent

"The Brent Spar," he said, "will make an ideal storage facility for millions of unsold copies of Punch, the humorous magazine."

A blueprint designed by marine artist Captain Mahood shows how the drilling platform, with its mile-long hollow legs, could be totally filled with specially compressed copies of the amusing New Year issue.

"It is clean, cheap and safe," said Mr Fayed, "and will rid the country of a massive pollution threat — i.e. Punch."



ADVERTISEMENT

HORLICK
for sound dreamless sleep

If you are having trouble going to sleep, open your newspaper and help yourself to a stomachful of rich boring Horlick.

Within minutes the soothing whine of Horlick will send you into a deep satisfying slumber.

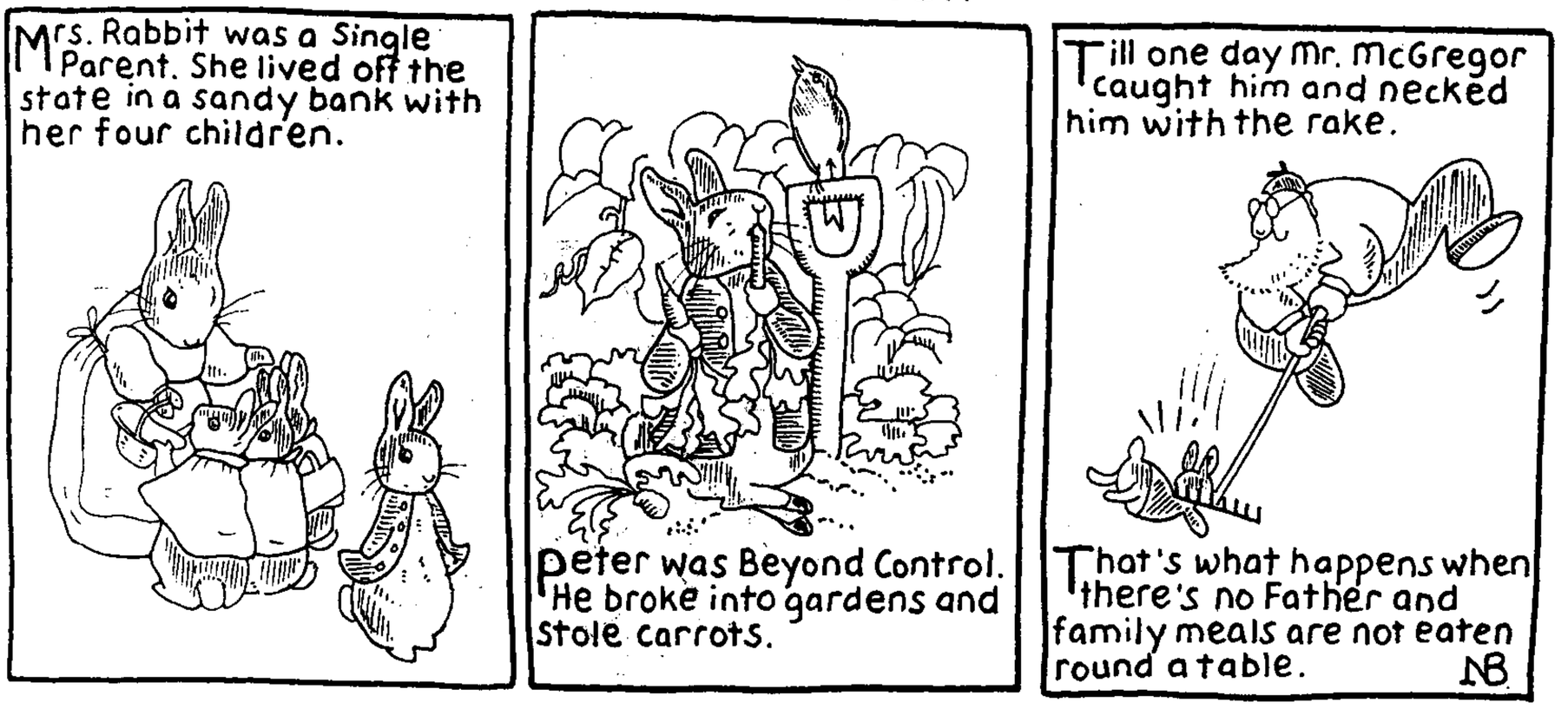
Horlick – For Working (And Out Of Work) Supermums Everywhere

Ingredients: 40% PR; 10% Artificial Sweetener; 50% Sour Grapes and Hard Cheese. **Price: £1 million**.

Mmmm! Z-z-z...

(Warning: Fishy smell and unpleasant taste may be left in mouth)

TORYTIME: The Tale of Peter Rabbit


Mrs. Rabbit was a Single Parent. She lived off the state in a sandy bank with her four children.
Peter was Beyond Control. He broke into gardens and stole carrots.
Till one day Mr. McGregor caught him and necked him with the rake.
That's what happens when there's no Father and family meals are not eaten round a table.
NB

School news

St Cake's

'Flu Term begins today. There are 409 boys in the sanatorium. Ben Ilyn-Original (Lemsip's) is Head Ache. Miss Anna Din (Meggozone's) is Night Nurse. Mr T.C.P. Mouthwash takes over all classes until the remainder of the staff are well enough to resume their duties. Strepsils will be given out on Beecham's Powder on Feb 24th. The Contact 2000 Centre will be opened on March 1st by Miss Cherry Tunes O.C. There will be a performance of The Fisherman's Friend by Benjamin Britten in the Lockets Room on March 15th (tickets from the Bursar, Major John Asprinall, Tiger House, Deadkeepers' Lane). Expectorants will be on March 21st.

Literary Review

Sense of humour failure

Seriously Funny: From the Ridiculous to the Sublime
Howard Jacobson
(Channel Four/Viking £20)

ODDLY enough, a study of the nature of comedy by Howard Jacobson stands fairly near the top of my list of improbable books, certainly on a level with the as yet unwritten *Humility* by Will Self and Martin Amis's *How to Live Modestly on Not Very Much a Year*.

Nevertheless, here it is — horribly overpriced, tied in with some Channel Four extravaganza, decked about with scholarly appurtenances (all Howard's blurbs go on about his having studied under F.R. Leavis, as if this had the slightest bearing on the kind of stuff he writes) and simply oozing with *gravitas* and rancour.

Rancour, did I hear you say? Well, if you were being hideously reductive you could say that there were two main theories of comedy and that they approximated to the old-fashioned views of history: the Whig view and the Tory view. The Whig view of comedy proposes that as human attitudes and sensibilities change over time, so the notion of what is funny develops with them: in other words, a medieval jester might have chuckled at cripples, but we late-twentieth sophisticates have a touch more humanity. The Tory view of comedy, on the other hand, believes in eternal comic verities, that various human activities (mostly bodily functions) are hilarious *per se*, and that anyone who disagrees just has *no sense of humour*.

In case you hadn't twigged, Howard Jacobson inclines to the Tory view. Thus pedigreed, *Seriously Funny* whips up a tremendous anthropological storm. It's all primal, darlings. Primitive man crapped, farted and exposed his genitals to his drinking chums and by God sir so shall we! Penises are *ipso facto* funny, the bigger the better, as is having excrement dumped on your head, sustaining serious bodily injury or having a physical deformity.

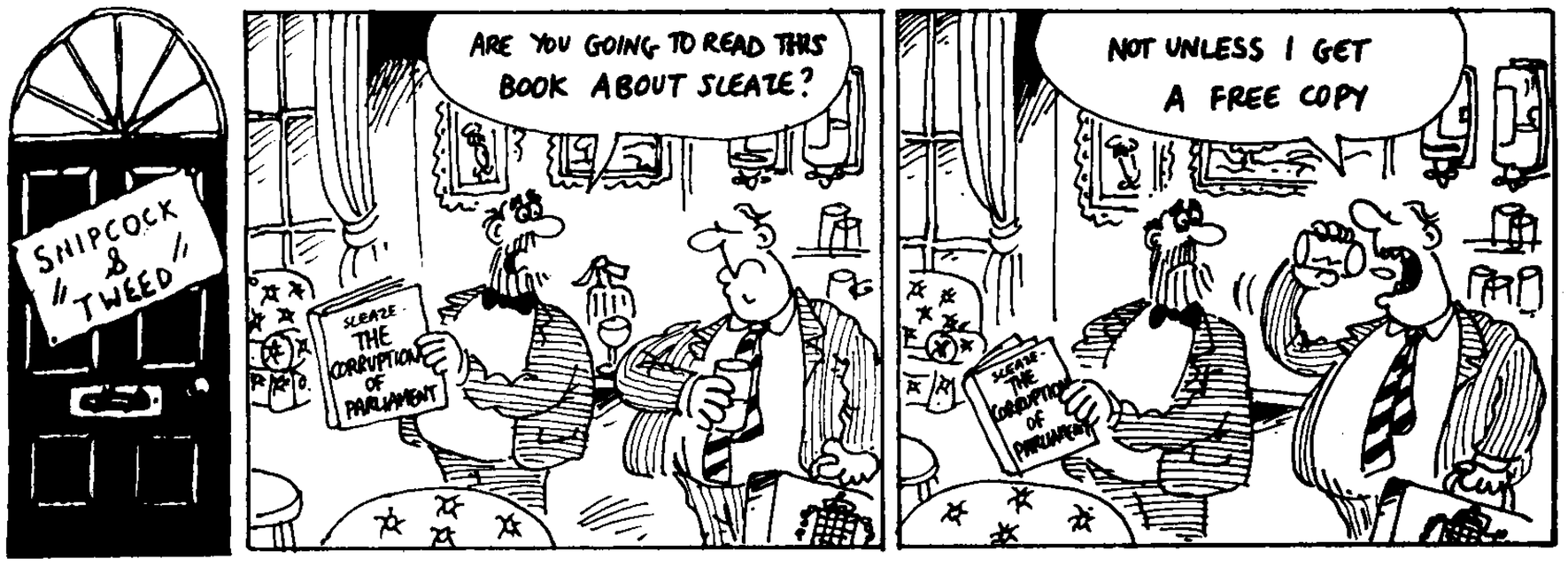
"If comedy... has one overriding preoccupation it is this," Jacobson notes, "that we resemble beasts more closely than we resemble gods, and that we make great fools of ourselves the moment we forget it." (I seem to remember Orwell saying something very similar, but never mind.) Moreover, all the farting and cussing is OK because "we gain ascendancy over what is vile in us by relishing it with coarse language".

We do? Well, that's all right then. Fortified by this justification, Howie shuffles off on a whirligig ride around some superfun happenings: a trip to St Petersburg in search of the celebrated Russian clown Slava Polunin; a visit to Bernard Manning's premises in Manchester; a saunter along the promenade at Blackpool (where he laughs himself senseless over some wanking jokes by Roy "Chubby" Brown, whose inventiveness would disgrace a school playground). The predominant tone, curiously enough, is belligerent rather than humorous, with any female, actual or hypothetical, daring to disagree coming in for a tremendous verbal assault — and yes, these "humourless little shits" are nearly always women.

As you may imagine, these dainty remarks have already attracted some serious protests from earnest female reviewers (or as Professor Lisa Jardine put it in the *Literary Review*: "We won't laugh, we shan't laugh, and we spoil all the fun."). But leaving aside the absurdly narrow terms of reference (what happened to "wit" for example, or the idea of comedy you could laugh *with* rather than *at*?) and the relentless feminist-baiting, *Seriously Funny* is simply all over the place.

If nothing else, one of Jacobson's more obvious blind spots is his refusal to countenance the technique/content divide, to admit that it is possible for a joke to work on a technical level while still being morally disgusting. Take the old Bernard Manning chestnut (not quoted here) about the "nigger" who walks into a pub with a parrot on his shoulder. "Where did you get that?" inquires the barman. "Oh, there's f*****g hundreds of them in the jungle in Africa" answers the parrot. Technically, this is hugely adroit, but I still think I'd walk out of the room if anyone told it — don't you? — however much of a politically correct sissy Mr Jacobson would think me.

What really marks out this thrumming opus, though, is the sour, niggling tone, and the sense of a large number of personal irritations being worked out in public. One hesitates to use one of Jacobson's favourite terms of comic abuse (p.128), but *Seriously Funny* would have had some point if its author didn't come across as such as miserable c**t.


SNIPCOCK & TWEED
ARE YOU GOING TO READ THIS BOOK ABOUT SLEAZE?
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BOOKS & BOOKMEN

☐ **HELEN FRASER, head prefect at Reed Books, as was confidently predicted, has been wooed away from the increasingly illiterate atmosphere of Michelin House all too quickly after the installation of John Holloran as chief executive.**

The surprise is that she has gone to sleepy Penguin, over the heads of the Queen, Clare Alexander; gentleman Tony Lacey; and Susan Watt, tireless publishing director of Michael Joseph. Only Philippa Milnes-Smith, supremo of children's books, and Peter "Nabokov" Carson, newly in charge of academic publishing, will not be answerable editorially to the new head prefect.

It is impressively to Fraser's credit that she has denounced to anyone inclined to listen the crassness of the latest Reed management, and her concern about the consequent likely departure of the few serious authors still published by Reed.

The current issue of the trade weekly *The Bookseller* remarks that "Reed has done marvellously well to keep its editorial team together in not very favourable circumstances. Whether it can continue to do so remains to be seen". It has to be more than likely that the other leaders of "the team", Heinemann publisher incisive Tom Weldon, and the glamorous and brilliant Louise Moore, will follow the head prefect to Penguin.

Reed Elsevier is right to think that it should sell off Reed Books. Its running of the division is crassly incompetent. Reed Books was taken off the market last year because offers such as Virgin's fell a few million short of the £100m Reed Elsevier wanted. Now the division has no managing director, and little chance, given its precarious state, of appointing someone of suitable calibre. It has sold off one of its most lucrative assets, Thomas the Tank Engine; and it is having increasing difficulty in finding agents willing to offer it books. Brilliant!

Meanwhile, industry observers eagerly await developments at Penguin, where Clare Alexander, queen bee at the Viking and Hamish Hamilton imprints, has been saying she will leave if someone like Fraser is appointed above her. We shall see.

■ *IN RECENT years Eddie "McBastard" Bell, executive chairman of Harpic-Collins, has at the holiday season sent his pals in the industry vast Harper Collins desk diaries, stamped in gold with the recipients' initials. Not so the Christmas just past. As last year, to keep the show on the road and Lady Thatcher and Lord Archer in the style he'd lavished upon them, "McBastard had been obliged to sell off the diary division".*

☐ NOT all staff at Granta Books have been treating star signing Jeanette "Madame Le Creuset" Winterson with the respect she deserves as one of the world's finest writers (© Jeanette Winterson).

In particular, a temporary telephonist who was having problems with the names of callers was unimpressed when Jeanette Winterson rang to speak to publisher Frances Coady. "There's a Janet Winterbottom on the line," trilled the soon to be ex-temporary telephonist.

'Bookworm'

footnotes

NHS: WASTING AWAY

WHEN he went to the House of Commons public accounts committee (PAC) last year to explain how millions of pounds of national health service money had been hurled down the drain on computer projects, Mr Alan Langlands, NHS chief executive, was asked an unusual question.

"If you saw someone walk into a brick wall, pick themselves up and walk into that same brick wall again, would the thought perhaps cross your mind that they might be either drunk or of unsound mind?"

1. WESSEX FAILS

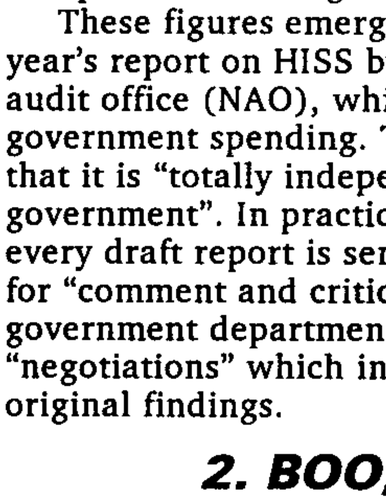
When Mr Langlands replied "yes", his interrogator, Swansea Labour MP Alan Williams, retorted: "That is exactly what you did." In 1993, the same committee had denounced the waste of £20m of NHS money on a bungled computer project in Wessex. Now, Williams protested, "you have blundered in and lost another £106m".

All the errors and dubious practices at Wessex, he and his colleagues insisted, had been repeated in the latest fiasco: six computer projects known as hospital information support systems (HISS). There was the same mad rush to get the systems up and running without proper planning, tendering or vetting; the same rip-off of the NHS by the suppliers; the same cover-up of technical chaos. The HISS project cost £106m and produced savings of £3.4m.

These figures emerged from last year's report on HISS by the national audit office (NAO), which supervises government spending. The NAO boasts that it is "totally independent of government". In practice, however, every draft report is sent before publication for "comment and criticism" to the relevant government department. There then follow "negotiations" which invariably dilute the original findings.

2. BOO, HISS!

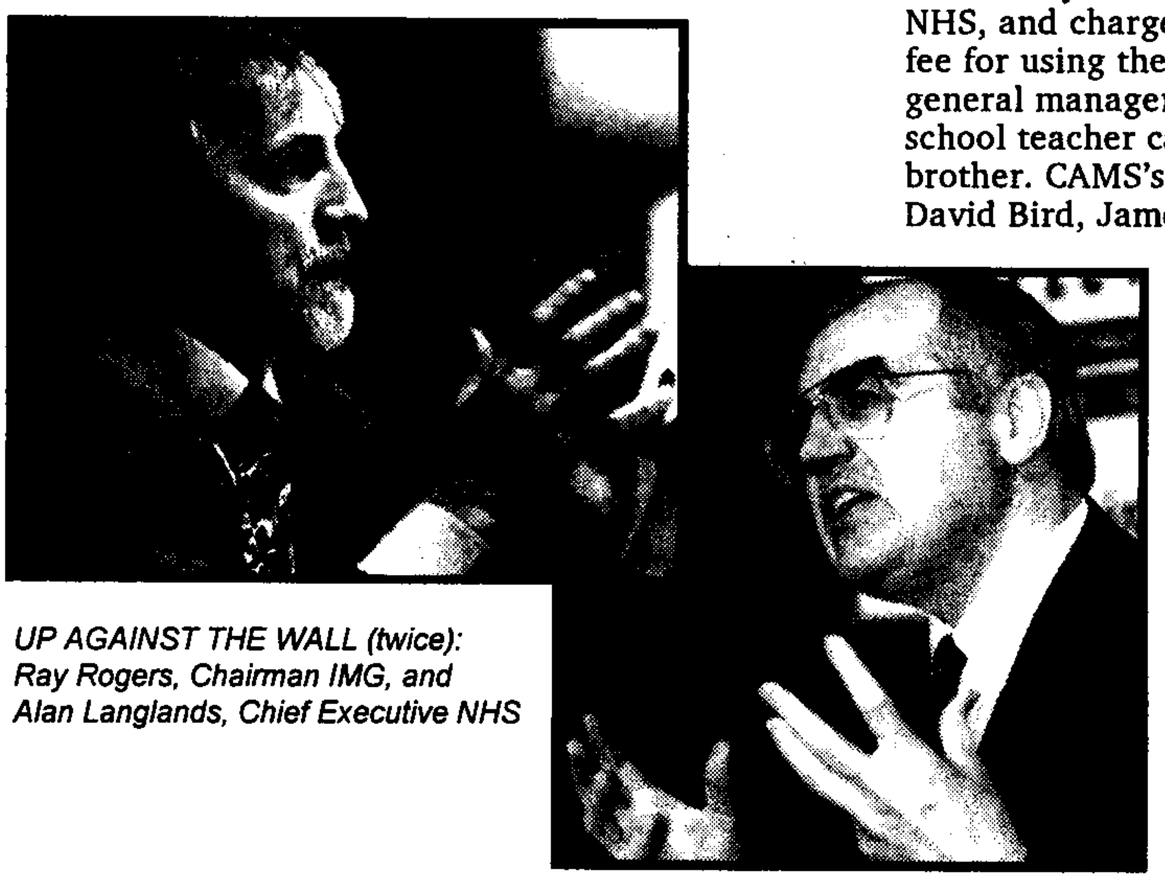
The *Eye* has a copy of the draft NAO report on HISS which went to the department of health in February 1995, *14 months* before it was published. The draft was an outspoken, frontal assault on the whole HISS project and especially on the health service's information management group (IMG) which devised it. By the time the report was published last year, it was emasculated almost beyond recognition. Though some criticisms remained, they were obscured by mild language quite different to the tone of the draft.



FEATS OF STEPHEN : Health Secretary Dorrell

For instance, the draft report concluded baldly: "The pilot projects represent a poor return for the £56m spent to date by the NHS Executive." This is watered down in the final report to: "There is still much work to do to ensure that integrated systems play a full part in the development of the NHS reforms and that the lessons learned for the NHS as a whole increase the value for money from the £56m which the Executive spent."

The draft report names the computer suppliers in the six projects and criticises them. For instance, in the most wasteful of the projects — £30m down the drain at Nottingham City Hospital — two experienced computer companies, IBM and Digital, backed off. This left only one tendering company, Oracle, which demanded a fantastic £12.5m for a system the IMG had hoped would cost only £2m. Nevertheless the IMG cheerfully dished out the (taxpayers') millions to Oracle, almost every penny of which was wasted.



UP AGAINST THE WALL (twice): Ray Rogers, Chairman IMG, and Alan Langlands, Chief Executive NHS

Darlington Memorial Hospital gave its HISS contract to another US company, McDonnell Douglas, even though "the proposals failed to meet some of the hospital's mandatory requirements". All sorts of "significant problems" followed. Three years later, when these problems were still not solved, the East Anglia consortium of hospitals, without even visiting the Darlington hospital, handed its contract to McDonnell Douglas. Not surprisingly, the same problems cropped up again with disastrous consequences.

Because the NAO's final report does not name a single company, they all escape public criticism. The draft also included an Appendix 2 which recorded the NAO's previous report of the Wessex scandal, and its five main "shortcomings". This appendix does not appear in the final report. Its absence made it much easier for NHS executives to pretend that the Wessex scandal was essentially different to HISS.

Now NAO is finishing yet another report on an NHS information systems scandal which for sheer government effrontery and crude conflict of interest puts Wessex and HISS into the shade.

Ten years ago, James Read, an enterprising GP and computer buff in Loughborough, Leics, developed an idea for a coding system to store clinical information on computers throughout the national health service.

After behind-the-scenes negotiations, the NHS struck an amazing deal with Dr Read: it bought the codes for £1.25m — £615,000 of which went to Dr Read himself — and set up a new section of the NHS, The Centre for Coding and Classification, to develop them.

The first director of the centre (on a salary now worth £90,000 a year of taxpayers' money) was Dr James Read. The centre was proudly opened in March 1990 by the up-and-coming Tory MP for Loughborough and new under-secretary of state for health, Stephen Dorrell. Across the road, Dr Read built new, almost identical offices for his company, Computer Aided Medical Systems, CAMS. The site was owned by a company whose main shareholder was Dr Read. CAMS exclusively marketed the Read codes in the NHS, and charged GPs and hospitals a licence fee for using them. An early appointment as general manager of CAMS was a primary school teacher called Robert Read, James's brother. CAMS's legal matters are handled by David Bird, James Read's solicitor. By 1995, CAMS had taken more than £6.2m in fees and made over £1m profit.

At first, the unusual arrangement whereby a private company had the exclusive rights to sell codes developed by a publicly-financed centre run by the company chairman, did not attract much attention. It was only when Read started to develop a third and very complicated version of his codes that questions were asked.

The first published doubts appeared in the *Health Service Journal* of February 1995. In the months that followed, staff working on a pilot project of the codes at the Withybush hospital in West Wales concluded, in the words of manager John Morgan, that "the Read project is now seriously compromised and is in danger of collapse".

3. CAMS SCAM

This criticism was taken up by Rhodri Morgan, Labour's spokesman on Welsh affairs, who asked 31 parliamentary questions about the Read affair, which he dubbed the "Cams scam". Ministers replied that everything about the centre and its codes was fine. The figures were covered up in the usual way. "Details of negotiations on behalf of my Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State [Stephen Dorrell]," said junior minister John Horam last 26 April, "are confidential."

Judicious leaks led to media investigations last summer — notably by the BBC's *World This Weekend* and the *Observer* — which cast doubt on the value of the codes. The *Eye* can reveal a further crisis which threatened the entire future of the Read project. While it was auditing CAMS accounts for the NHS, accountancy firm Binder Hamlyn was surprised to find a note written by general manager Robert Read stapled to the back of an invoice. The note advised

R. Read's chairman/brother J. Read to hoodwink the auditors by disguising the invoice.

The auditors hit the roof and reported CAMS to the NHS's information management group. CAMS was asked about what the IMG called "a deliberate attempt to deceive our auditors". The CAMS directors whined and grovelled, pleading that Robert Read had been "naive and foolish" and that the directors were "shocked and horrified" at his "absurd subterfuge" which was "inconsistent with our policy of total disclosure". Robert Read got a stiff letter telling him he had "put in jeopardy the whole of the company's future". He wasn't sacked. The auditors and the IMG dropped the matter.

DR JAMES READ: from G.P. to I.T.

Meanwhile, the evidence mounts that the third version of the Read codes might not be an overwhelming success. In February last year an internal memo at the centre quoted 11 consultants, all of whom had chaired speciality working groups, on what they thought of the codes. Only one approved them unconditionally. Typical comments were "very unimpressed... mismanaged"; "benefits of Read years in the future"; "put in a lot for little return"; "thinks Read has lost its way — sees no point in moving to Read"; "far too many omissions and idiosyncrasies". A recent article in the journal of the Royal College of Radiology concluded: "Read version three cannot be recommended for use in radiology departments in its current form."

The chorus of criticism has recently had some effect. An NHS statement on 9 December announced "new arrangements" for the Centre for Coding and Classification. Dr Read was replaced as chairman by a member of the Leicestershire Health Authority. CAMS' exclusive right to distribute the Read codes was removed — but not until when the contract ends in March 1999. Ray Rogers, boss of IMG, promised to clear out in the summer.

But the government stands steadfastly by the Read codes which they say are being used to good purpose by 1,700 doctors' practices and nearly 100 hospitals. "These codes," say the NHS, "are by far the best in the world". Whether the national audit office takes the same view in its report (which looks like being delayed until after the election) is doubtful. In that election, the man in charge of all this, the secretary of state for health, the Rt Hon Stephen Dorrell, will be defending a 10,883 majority at Loughborough.

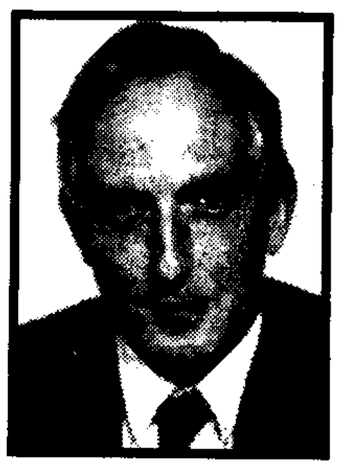
PROSECUTION COMPLEX

THE people mainly responsible for wrongful convictions are prosecutors, so it was inevitable that the new criminal cases review commission, which takes over the adjudication of alleged injustices from the home office, should have its fair share of, well, prosecutors.

Two outstanding appointments are those of David Kyle, currently chief crown prosecutor in the central casework unit of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), and Fiona King, former assistant chief crown prosecutor. The *Eye* asked the CPS whether Kyle or King had been involved in preparing any of the notorious quashed prosecutions of the 1970s and 1980s. The *Eye* named, for example, the Birmingham Six, the Guildford Four, the Tottenham Three, the cases of Judy Ward, Stephan Kiszko, Eddie Browning, Alban Turner, Colin Wallace, the Taylor sisters, the Swansea Two, the Cardiff Three.

At first the CPS said it could not give out such specific information. When the *Eye* persisted, the CPS spokeswoman said: "If you want to say that these individuals [King and Kyle] may well have had an involvement in preparing these cases, yes, you would be correct in saying that."

The other 11 members of the commission who will serve under Midlands Tory and freemason Sir Fred Crawford are eight "specialists": a former chief constable; a former member of the Police Complaints Authority (PCA); a former deputy director of the Serious Fraud Office; a consultant with a City legal firm specialising in take-overs; a criminal law professor; a Northern Ireland coroner; a VAT tribunal chairman; and a forensic psychiatrist. The three "lay" members to represent the general public are a burglar alarm company director and two former chief executives.



DAVID KYLE

There is no investigative journalist; no author of books on injustices; no defence lawyer. Of the whole bunch only forensic psychiatrist Dr James MacKeith has the slightest experience of ever challenging an injustice, let alone overturning one. All in all, wrongly-convicted people were much better off with the dreadful old C3 department at the home office.

Sheppard's Pie

■ **AS THE election approaches, watch out for a letter in the *Times* from an enormous number of "leading British businessmen" arguing passionately that a vote for the Tory party is the only possible vote for Britain.**

Last time (1992) this letter was organised with great skill and panache by Sir Allen Sheppard, as he then was, chief executive and chairman of the vast property, food and drinks giant Grand Metropolitan. Sir Allen sent the letter from the offices of Business in the Community, a charity strongly supported by the Prince of Wales.

STILL STUFFING: Lord Sheppard

The people responded at the polls to the good Sheppard's call, and look how he has prospered. He was made Lord Sheppard of Didgemere in 1994. But he had to wait until the very last days of the Tory government before getting his real reward.

Lord Sheppard is a director of the newly-privatised Anglia Railways. In the spirit of popular share ownership which inspired the privatisation, the directors were given 1.75 million shares each (the workers were not allowed any). The directors then bought an extra 250,000 shares, and control of more than a quarter of the whole company. The shares were priced at £1 each. The day after the flotation they were suddenly worth £2.10, giving every director, including Lord Sheppard, an instant paper profit of £710,000.

de Ramsey v. de Ramsey

■ CAN a quango prosecute itself? For the answer, follow these facts carefully.

1) The Environment Agency is a quango which prosecutes water polluters.

2) The chairman of the Environment Agency is the 4th Baron de Ramsey, who is very qualified for the job since his family seat is in John Major's constituency.

3) On 12 January, at Sudbury magistrates' court, the Environment Agency prosecuted Strutt and Parker (Farms) for allowing a manure storage heap to topple into a clear stream and poison it.

4) Strutt and Parker (Farms), which made £1.2m profit last year, and could only spare £1,050 for the Tory party, pleaded guilty and was fined £4,000.

5) A prominent director of Strutt and Parker (Farms) is the 4th Baron de Ramsey.

PROF ON THE DOLE? Eric Caines

MARK OF CAINES

■ **CHANCELLOR Ken Clarke is not the only cabinet minister who is embarrassed and annoyed by the sudden and mysterious departure of Prof Eric Caines from the new Centre for Health Services Management at Nottingham University, of which he was director (see *Eye* 914). Another is home secretary Michael Howard.**

Normally opposed to big public spending projects, Howard is dedicated to his frantic plans to build more private prisons with public money. Ever since the criminal justice and public order act of 1994 accelerated the privatisation programme, the home office has favoured three firms for private prison contracts: UK Detention Services; Group 4; and Premier Prisons.

Worried that Premier Prisons had too much American influence (it is part-owned by a Florida security organisation called Wackenhut), Howard searched around for a suitably impressive British presence on the board. There were the usual two qualifications. The new director had to be a Tory and a fanatical privatiser. Prof Caines fitted the bill perfectly, and he became a director of Premier in August 1994. Is his future on the Premier board any more secure than at Nottingham?

You can write to Paul Foot at 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or leave a message for him on 0171 287 3183

In the City

WHO, other than deputy prime minister Michael Heseltine and the local Labour party in Greenwich, wants the Millennium exhibition?

Certainly not most of the vital corporate sponsors who are being dragooned into donating £150 million towards the cost of this custom-made white elephant. As one of the City institutions who rejected Hezza's kind invitation put it last year: "What we are being asked to do is stump up millions of pounds for a project that will last 12 months in a building we do not have and on land we do not own."

Why then have some major companies already pledged support for the exhibition pavilions which will cost £12 million each? "People are being strongarmed to put money in on the basis they have a relationship with the government," explained one of those who is already in. "There is no enthusiasm. People have their arms up their backs."

The business elite who have been approached know the exhibition does not make commercial sense. Hezza admitted as such at a crisis meeting last year when he asked sponsors to "make a leap of faith" without any hope of a commercial return. The sponsors are also resigned to the exhibition overrunning in classic British big project-style (cf British Museum Library; Channel Tunnel; etc). So is the government. At a recent meeting heritage secretary Virginia Bottomley declared cheerily that such projects "always go over budget". The only question is by how much will the new reduced £580 million be exceeded. The betting is that the final bill will be nearer £800 million — if all goes well. That's why the taxpayer and the lottery cheque books will have to remain open beyond 2001.

A large part of the pessimism felt by those approached to invest is the dismal impression created by those running the Millennium commission. Ace Whitehall bean counter Sir Peter Levene, called in to help rescue the project by recruiting big business sponsors, is said to be withering in his criticism of the project's management. So are most of the suits in those companies who have had dealings with the commission. That rating has not been raised by the departure of chief executive Barry Hartop and his replacement by the commission secretary Jennifer Page. She is seen as lacking the commercial experience to run such a major project within budget.

Only the importance of good relations with Westminster and Whitehall to many of those who are already declared runners or tipped to become so has produced promises of cash.

Consider first those who have already promised to invest their £12 million for a pavilion.

First out of the traps and leading from the front is **British Airways**, whose chief executive Robert Ayling will chair the company which will run the exhibition. BA is in constant need of government goodwill in its battle to maintain its market position. Right now it needs — and has obtained — government backing for its link up with American Airlines which is opposed by rivals and the European commission. No company was closer to Margaret Thatcher, and BA has retained that intimacy with John Major. Now, through Ayling (an unofficial Blair adviser), BA is cosying up to Tony Blair. Such connections and Millennium contributions could keep a Labour government onside regarding not just the American deal but also future deals, and avoid the threatened windfall tax on privatised companies: £6 million plus change is a small price to pay for such help.

BA's partners in its pavilion are **BAA** and **British Aerospace**. BAA, like BA, is keen to see Terminal Five built at Heathrow, which it runs, despite the objections of those living in the area who want BAA instead to expand Gatwick or Stansted. Government support will be crucial here. It too could be a windfall tax target.

The government is not only BAe's biggest customer but it has to approve all arms sales abroad, especially those to repressive regimes like Indonesia.

British Telecom, like BA, is in the middle of a giant transatlantic deal, its proposed takeover of MCI. That needs government support, not least with the industry regulators here and in the US. Then there is the pressure on its market from rival telecom and cable companies who are constantly lobbying. Finally there is the windfall tax factor. All of which makes £12 million cheap — especially as BT has already dialled Blair's number with its offer to connect every school to the information highway.

British Gas, which is providing the Greenwich site, is also under pressure from rivals and in need of help with a hostile regulatory regime. It also could be a windfall tax loser. British Gas has probably agreed to invest more than anyone — up to £20 million.

The only other declared runner is the **City of London Corporation**, which is putting in £6 million and promising to find another £6 million from financial institutions. The City's need for government help is less direct, but it will certainly need support if the European union common currency decisions favour Frankfurt over London.

Then there are the suggested potential sponsors:

- **BSkyB** — Murdoch was quick to cosy up to Blair. With cross media ownership and competition from other cable groups, BT and the BBC, nobody needs friends in Downing Street more than the Digger.
- **London Electricity** — a certain windfall tax target.
- **Rolls Royce** — the government is a big customer and also must approve deals such as those with Argentina.
- **GEC** — ditto.
- **Woolwich Building Society** — keen to see legislation which allows expansion once it becomes a bank.
- **Royal Mail** — very dependent on government goodwill for its expansion plans and to protect it from predatory rivals.
- **British Petroleum** — a major player offshore where government controls licences and regulations.
- **Hanson Energy** — the spin off from Lord Hanson of Tory Party Contributions' empire is also much influenced by government decisions.
- **Glaxo Wellcome** — like all pharmaceutical groups dependent on the government as a major customer, through the NHS, and regulator, via safety regulation and licensing of drugs.
- **SmithKline Beecham** — ditto.
- **Zeneca** — and again.

So, much as the men in suits see the Millennium as a commercial loss, they know that those who pay up will have a substantial millennium marker to be called at any time up to 2000 and beyond — whoever is in power and paying the rest of the bill. And don't forget the knighthoods and peerages.

DESPITE promises of a £20m budget, the Referendum party's supreme leader Sir James Goldsmith was somewhat slow to push the electoral boat out. Recently filed accounts for the party show that in the period from its foundation in November 1994 to March last year it spent just under £500,000. This money came entirely from the Goldsmith Foundation for European Affairs. The current poster and newspaper blitz suggests this figure has already been well exceeded. But £20 million? We will see.

WHAT is the connection between Derek Bonham, chief executive of Hanson, and Sir Nicholas Scott asks a reader from brokers BZW. None is the obvious answer. Derek Bonham is a highly respected businessman and Sir Nicholas Scott is a not so highly respected and soon to be ex-MP.

DECISION time will soon arrive regarding the new director of the Serious Farce Office who will replace the luckless George Staple in April.

This time the betting is that the attorney-general Sir Nicholas Lyell will learn his lesson and go for someone with criminal prosecution experience rather than a civil lawyer. Suggested possible candidates include junior judge Geoffrey Rivlin and Anthony Hacking QC. Suggestions that the Maxwell fat controller John Tate, now at the parliamentary ombudsman's office, may be a contender will raise the spirits of white collar criminals and their briefs everywhere.

But no one can say the SFO does not have a sense of humour, so who knows? After all,it has allowed back the hapless Fred Coford, now in charge of investigating the suits at DIY group Wickes who helped to falsify the profit figures by multi-millions. Coford starred in the Levitt plea bargain blunder, but despite that has returned from secondment at Lloyd's, a move which will no doubt have fraudsmen shaking — with laughter.

'Slicker'

SIGNAL FAILURES

WHILE trains travel at a sustained 150mph or more on France's mainlines, Britain's most important rail line is littered with speed restrictions as low as 20mph. This is due to a backlog of maintenance by Railtrack and postponement of a badly needed upgrading programme as a result of privatisation and government ineptitude.

A leaked Railtrack notice for late December shows 43 speed restrictions between Euston and Crewe alone. BR used to allow no more than 10 at a time between Euston and Glasgow, and when it handed the West Coast line to Railtrack in 1994 there were *no speed restrictions* at all.

ONE *Eye* reader experienced the chill wind of rail privatisation when his train was replaced by a bus which left *before* the train was due to leave.

Seeing passengers from a delayed train waiting on the platform at Barnetby, near Scunthorpe, the passenger telephoned the rail inquiry bureau to check whether the cold weather had affected his train. He was told his train could not run but had been replaced by a bus — which left Barnetby *11 minutes before* the train was due to leave.

What purpose such a bus serves is unclear, considering that most passengers don't arrive at local stations 11 minutes early. Only cynics would suggest that a substitute bus running early, although empty, could prevent another cancellation and delay being chalked up on the passenger's charter tally.

MORE trouble on Eurostar. On the same day that 469 people were stranded deep in the Channel tunnel (see last *Eye*) 20 adults and children returning from a trip to Eurodisney in France tried to get off the train at Ashford "International" station in Kent.

Unfortunately the door to their carriage failed to open, and so with children and luggage in tow they rushed to the next carriage where... the door also failed to open. The party had to stay on the train until Waterloo, and were told by the guard that this had happened before.

At Waterloo the party was not met by the duty manager whom it had requested to see, but was instead met by three British Transport police who shepherded the group to taxis. Adults and children were then forced to drive through a blizzard to their homes in Kent.

The Eye asked Eurostar about the implications of the jammed doors for passenger safety. A public relations officer replied: "In the unlikely event that these systems become disabled in an emergency, a manual override system can be operated by passengers to allow for evacuation... emergency exits can also be made through certain windows."

And he added: "We have already started a programme to improve the signage on the door to make the opening procedure even more evident." Very reassuring.

'Dr B. Ching'

"The bastards are everywhere!"

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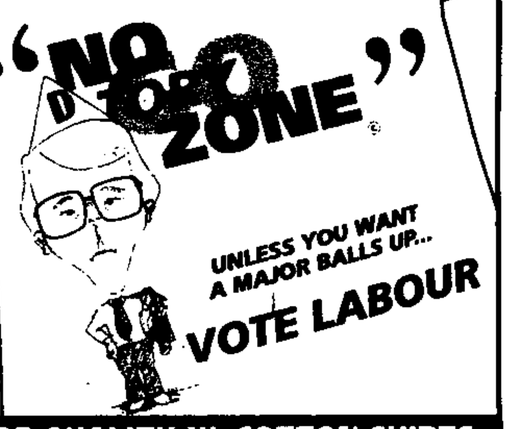

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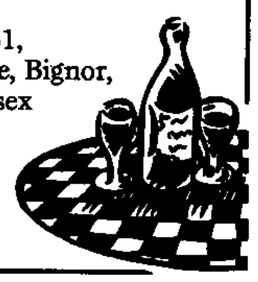

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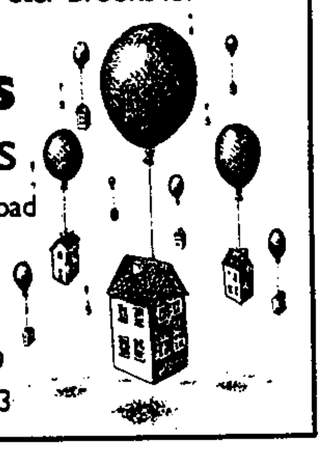

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QUOTE

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SPEECHWRITING by MITCH MURRAY. See Page 31.

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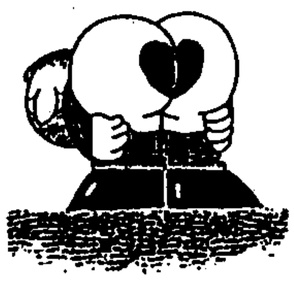

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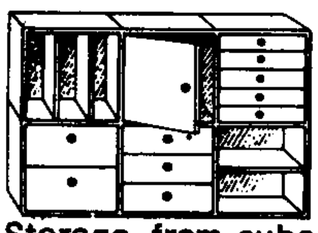

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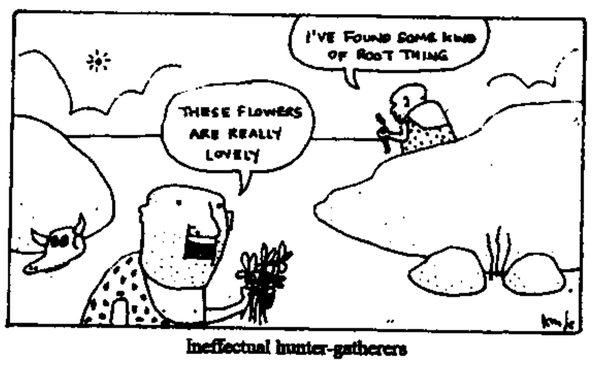

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ADDRESS _____

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PLEASE ENCLOSE 3 FIRST CLASS STAMPS

Please complete in block capitals

1. Mr ❒ Mrs ❒ Ms ❒

Surname:_____

First Name:_____

Address: _____

_____

_____ Post Code:_____

Tel No. _____

I am seriously interested in meeting someone through Dateline.

2. Personal Information

Marital Status: Single ❒ Divorced ❒
Widowed ❒ Separated ❒

Age:_____ Height:_____

Occupation: _____

Religion:_____

Build: slight ❒ medium ❒ large ❒

Attractiveness:

Very attractive ❒ Attractive ❒ Average ❒

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3. Education

Private / Public ❒ Grammar ❒
Comprehensive ❒
Secondary Modern ❒

O Levels / GCSE's ❒ A levels ❒
Further Education ❒
University / Professional Equivalent ❒
Technical Qualification ❒

4. Your Personality

(tick which traits closely describe you)

❒ Affectionate ❒ Fashionable
❒ Serious ❒ Practical
❒ Considerate ❒ Conventional
❒ Shy ❒ Reliable
❒ Romantic ❒ Adventurous

5. Your Attitudes

(tick for yes, cross for no or leave blank if you don't feel strongly)

❒ Do you prefer town life?
❒ Do you involve yourself with community activities?
❒ Do you have many friends of your own sex?
❒ Are you interested in current affairs?
❒ Are you looking for one special relationship?
❒ Do you like team activities?
❒ Does your work make it difficult to meet new people?
❒ Do you feel resentful when forced to act quickly?
❒ Do you want to extend your social life as well as finding a special relationship?
❒ Do you devote a lot of time to your social life?

6. Your interests

(sections 6. and 7. Please tick for a liking, cross for a dislike or leave blank for no pref.)

❒ Wining/Dining ❒ Jazz/Folk music
❒ Pubs ❒ Classical music
❒ Sports/Keep fit ❒ Theatre/Arts
❒ Entertaining ❒ Watching TV
❒ Reading ❒ Smoking
❒ Travelling ❒ Mixing with friends
❒ Walking ❒ Children
❒ Cinema ❒ D.I.Y. / Crafts
❒ Pets/Animals ❒ Gardening
❒ Pop music ❒ Sightseeing

7. Details of the partner you would like:

Minimum age:_____ Maximum age:_____

Height: min._____ max._____Don't mind ❒

Marital status: Single ❒ Divorced ❒
Widowed ❒ Separated ❒
Don't mind ❒

Build: slight ❒ medium ❒ large ❒

Attractiveness:

Very attractive ❒ Attractive ❒ Average ❒

Dept. *PE 59*

Please answer the questions above, cut out this page and send it to us at Dateline 23 Abingdon Road, London W8 6AL ***or call us now on (01869) 324 100***

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